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PERIODICAL
READING ROOM

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE B-TEXT OF *PIERS PLOWMAN*

By T. P. DUNNING, C.M.

IT is now very generally agreed that the organizing factors in the B-text of *Piers Plowman* are the concepts of the Active, Contemplative, and Mixed Lives as distinguished by the medieval theologians and spiritual writers. There is, however, no general agreement as to how these factors operate in determining the structure of the poem.¹ Certain questions still present themselves, of which the most insistent is concerned with the relationship between the two main parts into which the poem is divided, the *Visio de Petro Plowman* and the *Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest*. If Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest represent the Active, Contemplative, and Mixed Lives, with what aspect—if any—of the spiritual life of man is the *Visio* concerned? And in what sense and to what extent do the three divisions of the *Vita* represent the traditional divisions of the spiritual life?

I hope to show that a closer examination of the terms 'Active', 'Contemplative', and 'Mixed' Lives in their fourteenth-century connotation will throw some further light on these questions.

I

It is first useful to recall that Langland had a vast body of uniform spiritual teaching on which to draw. One of the many services which Mr. Pantin's recent work on the English Church in the fourteenth century has accomplished for students of medieval English literature is to make clear how the teaching of the Fathers and doctors had, by that time, become available to a very wide public in a great number of semi-popular and popular manuals and compendia.²

¹ For an excellent summary of the different interpretations of these concepts proposed by critics of the poem, see E. Talbot Donaldson, *Piers Plowman. The C-Text and its Poet* (New Haven, 1949), pp. 156-61; and for an admirable discussion of the various views, see S. S. Hussey, 'Langland, Hilton, and the Three Lives', *R.E.S.*, N.S. vii (1956), 132-50. Mr. Hussey reaches the conclusion that 'neither the triad active, contemplative, and mixed lives, nor the triad purgative, illuminative, and unitive states, nor a combination of the two is completely satisfactory as a definition of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest . . .' (p. 146). The present article will suggest that the definitions of the active, contemplative, and mixed lives so far put forward by critics of *Piers Plowman* have not fully taken into account the connotation of those terms in Langland's time.

² W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 189-262. I should like to mention three works in particular which became vade mecum of the clergy during the fourteenth century and which I have consulted for this paper: Hugh of Strasbourg's *Compendium Theologicæ Veritatis*, a summary of St. Thomas's

Properly to understand the poet's use of this body of teaching on the Christian life, which is essentially the inner life of the individual, one must take into account the scope and purpose of the poem. The one is indicated in the Prologue; the other in Passus I. From the beginning, Langland shows that his subject is Christian Society, or the Church; and that his concern is with the reform of society. It would seem that he largely takes for granted the traditional teaching on the spiritual life of the Christian: and while using this as the framework of his poem in such a way as never to distort its systematic character, he constantly modifies it to reflect his preoccupation with (a) Christian society, and (b) the society of his own time and its peculiar problems. Two examples may serve to illustrate the point.

The first is from Passus XIX. Langland has here come to the final stage of the spiritual life: we have moved from Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction through Patience and Poverty to Faith, Hope, and Charity; and now to the Cardinal Virtues. According to the traditional *schema*, the final element of the spiritual equipment is the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. But instead of describing these gifts—Wisdom, Understanding, and the rest, which guide the soul to the higher flights of mysticism—Langland describes the gifts of the Holy Ghost as the talents each man receives for a particular work in the world; and he makes the giving of these gifts the starting-point for building up again at the end of his poem that composite picture of Christian society we saw in the Prologue. This time, in Passus XIX, first the ideal; then, as in the Prologue, the contemporary. And so his end, like Mr. Eliot's, is in his beginning.

The other example is from the *Vita de Dowel*. This represents the beginning of the spiritual life proper; and a principal feature of such a beginning, according to all the spiritual writers, is coming to know oneself. In the *Benjamin Major*, for instance, Richard of St. Victor points out in some detail how the knowledge of oneself is first necessary if one wishes to lead a spiritual life worthy of the name. The diversity of our human faculties, the multiplicity of affections, the perpetual mobility of the mind are elements which must be understood if one wishes to control them. Besides, concupiscence having veiled the eye of the intelligence, how are we to distinguish the good from the bad, how can we judge the movements of the heart, how discern their provenance? A reconnaissance of the ter-

Summa, mentioned by Richard Rolle, and popular for over 300 years; John of Freiburg's revision of Raymond of Peñafort's *Summa Confessorum*, a useful and most popular compendium of Canon Law, recommended by the pope to every priest engaged in pastoral work; and William of Pagula's *Oculus Sacerdotis*, written c. 1320, of which some 50 manuscripts survive in England (Pantin, op. cit., pp. 195-205; L. E. Boyle, 'The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and some other works of William of Pagula', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 5th Series, v (1955), 81-110).

rain where one is to exercise the inner life is indispensable. Richard judges that *discretio* and *deliberatio* take charge of that necessary work.¹ It seems that Passus VIII–XII really constitute that phase of the Christian's development where the dreamer comes to know himself. Scripture says at the beginning of Passus XII, 'Multi multa sciunt sed seipsos nesciunt'; and the same point is underlined by Ymagynatyf throughout Passus XII. One might also refer to the effects of concupiscence on the intelligence, vividly described in Passus XI. This is, however, the framework. Within this framework, Langland has embodied two of the main intellectual preoccupations of his day: the place of learning in the good life and the problem of Predestination.² These are represented as the chief clouds which obscure the dreamer's vision of the ground he has to cover.

Such manipulation of the body of traditional teaching presupposes among the poem's first readers a familiarity with the main lines of that teaching. The same assumption underlies the poem's outward structure. Its significance may be better understood by examining the terms 'Contemplation' and 'Action'.

II

'The traditional doctrine of the two ways of life, the one of Action, the other of Contemplation, is so clearly suggested in the incident of Martha and Mary that it must be considered to have its origin in the Gospel itself.'³ Nevertheless, during the early centuries, especially at Alexandria, Christian thought on the subject was profoundly influenced by Neoplatonic philosophy. In the pagan tradition, the Contemplative Life meant a life of study, consecrated to philosophical speculation; the Active Life, one devoted to external works and especially to political affairs. The influence of this tradition on the Christian theologians at Alexandria may be seen in the high speculative quality they attributed to the Contemplative Life, by reason of the *gnosis*, which for them distinguished the perfect Christian. Cassian, on the other hand, in resuming the teaching of the Egyptian monks on Christian perfection, puts forward a somewhat different view. The life of the Egyptian coenobites was, in fact, not contemplative

¹ *Benj. Maj.*, iii, c. 23, 132 B–C–D. Summarized and discussed in G. Dumeige, *Richard de Saint-Victor et l'idée chrétienne de l'amour* (Paris, 1952), pp. 54–56. 'Le 14^e siècle est tributaire de la notion de contemplation élaborée durant les siècles précédents: à travers les définitions et les classifications de saint Thomas et de saint Bonaventure, on a conservé notamment la trace de Hugues et de Richard de Saint-Victor' (François Vandembroucke, *Dict. de Spiritualité* (Paris, 1952), ii, 1988).

² Discussed in Pantin, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–35. See also T. P. Dunning, 'Langland and the Salvation of the Heathen', *M.Æ.*, xii (1943), 45–54.

³ H. Bérard, 'Action et Contemplation', *La Vie Spirituelle*, xx (1929), 135. The most comprehensive discussion of this complex subject is in the *Dict. de Spiritualité*, ii, 1643–2193. See also: P. Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality* (3 vols., tr. London, 1922–6); Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism* (London, 2nd edn., 1927).

in the Alexandrian sense, being very little speculative and very much given up to manual labour. In his fourteenth *Conference*, Cassian divides the Contemplative Life into two parts, actual and theoretic. By the theoretic (*theoria*), he means the act of contemplation itself. He is quite clear that this act is not continuous: one cannot, as it were, *live* this kind of life. One achieves the act of contemplation from time to time. 'The actual life is the cultivation of virtues. This is, as it were, the setting of the contemplative life. Cassian does not seem greatly concerned with the precise character of this setting: it may be a hermitage; but it may also be the reception and care of strangers—what we should now call active good works.¹

It would seem that the teaching of St. Gregory on the spiritual life, from which the Western tradition chiefly derives, is a development of these ideas of Cassian. For 'Gregory, the great clerk', as Langland calls him, the Active and Contemplative Lives are not lived separately by two distinct categories of people, but should be united in the lives of everyone; for the life of pure contemplation is quite beyond the power of human nature.² In his view, contemplation is an act wherein the mind, having disengaged itself from the things of this world and fixed its attention on spiritual things, is by a great effort raised above itself to a direct and simple intuition of God, not by a process of reasoning but by a close union of love. This perception of the 'unencircled Light' 'as through a chink' is momentary; and then the mind, exhausted by the effort and blinded by the vision of the Light, falls back wearied to its normal state, to recuperate its spiritual strength by exercising the works of the active life, till in due time it can again brace itself for the effort of another act of contemplation.³

The Contemplative Life, then, in St. Gregory's mind, is not that solely which excludes the external works of the Active Life to devote the greater part of the time to actual contemplation: it is that which has Contemplation for its proper end, abstracting altogether from the amount of time given respectively to external works and to prayer. Contemplation is possible in a life crowded with external activity—as were, no doubt, the lives of many of those whom St. Gregory addressed; as were, for instance, the lives of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Bridget of Sweden and other contemporaries of Langland who achieved the highest Christian perfection. St. Gregory's distinction is based on the principle that in the moral order it is the end

¹ Cassian, *Conferences*, tr. Robert (London, 1847), ii. Conf. xiv.

² St. Gregory's teaching on the spiritual life is to be found chiefly in his *Homilies on Ezekiel* and in his *Morals on Job*. The latter book was written for monks, and Langland refers to it in regard to monks, in Clergye's speech in x. 292-9. The *Homilies*, however, were not addressed to monks, but to the ordinary people of Rome; and they embody the same teaching. In the present article I am indebted to Dom Butler's study of St. Gregory's teaching in *Western Mysticism*, pp. 91-133.

³ *Homilies on Ezekiel*, II. ii, tr. Butler, op. cit., pp. 93-95. Cf. II. v: Butler, pp. 98-101.

which specifies the acts. So was begun the great Western tradition of spirituality. St. Bernard, the Victorines, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas are fully in accord with St. Gregory.¹

The importance of this teaching is that Contemplation is open to all: the Contemplative Life is conceived as the perfection of the ordinary Christian life, charity in a high degree.² Some Christians, such as monks and hermits, lead a kind of life which is deliberately ordered towards Contemplation as its end: their state will be often referred to as 'the Contemplative Life'. Nevertheless, their lives, too, must necessarily be a blend of Action and Contemplation. And Contemplation is not confined to those in the monastic state.

The perfection for which man can hope on earth is, however, only relative, because 'as long as we are on earth, there is always room in us for an increase of charity'. Hence, 'if the perfecting of our spiritual life be nothing else than growth in justice and charity, then its essential law will be progress'.³ This concept of progress brings forward the notion of stages on the journey. These stages were discussed and analysed by the doctors from early Christian times; and by Langland's time the notion of three main stages in the progress of the soul towards God had become a traditional view. These stages constitute one aspect of the triple division Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest.

Since, in St. Gregory's view, the good Christian life at even its highest stage on earth is a blend of Action and Contemplation, in what sense can Dowel be considered to represent the Active Life? Or in what sense, if any, does the *Visio* represent the Active Life, as Mr. Coghill would have it?⁴

It must be noted that the terms 'Action', 'Active Life', as used by St.

¹ St. Thomas's teaching on the subject is very substantial, comprising not only forty-eight articles in the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa*, but also a number of *opuscula* on the Religious Life and the Religious State, ed. R. M. Spiazzi, *Opuscula Theologica S. Thomae Aquinatis, II: de re spirituali* (Rome, 1954). For an analysis of two treatises contemporary with Langland, see W. A. Pantin, 'Two Treatises of Uthred of Boldon on the Monastic Life' in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 363-85.

² Hence St. Gregory says: 'The contemplative life means the keeping of charity towards God and our neighbour, and the fixing of all our desires on our Creator', *Mor. in Job*, vi. 18 (tr. mine). This is the main theme of Langland's poem. 'Loue is leche of lyf', says Holy Church at the end of Passus 1, 'and also the graith gate that goth into heuene' (B. 202-3). Not merely is this theme constantly reiterated throughout the poem and especially stressed when the poet is defining Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest, but there will be found a progressive strengthening and deepening of the teaching on Charity, culminating in the speech of the Samaritan in Passus xvii (note particularly ll. 250-92), and having as its climax the Passion and Death of Christ and its redemptive effects, as described in Passus xviii. Cf. Vandenbroucke in *Dict. de Spiritualité*, ii. 1988: 'A la suite de saint Bonaventure, sans doute, l'amour prendra au 14^e siècle une place prépondérante dans la notion de contemplation.'

³ Pourrat, *op. cit.*, i. 186-7.

⁴ 'The Character of Piers Plowman', *M.A.E.*, ii (1933), 108-35.

Gregory, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and other spiritual writers, refer to the *spiritual life*: the 'action' denoted is not any kind of action, such as manual labour, but the active practice of virtue. The distinction is not between *otiosa* and *negotiosa*: the good works of the Active Life are works of religion and devotion.¹ In other words, the Active Life is the ascetical life.

The Active Life may be considered under two aspects. First, these good works—vocal prayer, mortification, the service of the neighbour, the practice of the virtues—constitute the normal conditions under which the spiritual life is lived on no matter how high a plane. Whether the spiritual life of any individual have the character of Active or Contemplative does not depend on the absence of activity but on the presence of contemplation.² Secondly, the term Active Life is used in a more restricted sense. The spiritual writers are agreed that to achieve union with God in prayer we must remove in ourselves the obstacles to the working of God's grace in us. This we do by severe self-discipline in the spiritual formation of our character—that is, by the good works of the Active Life. In this sense, the Active Life is a state in which contemplation is not yet present. And in this restricted sense, the Active Life is conceived as a stage of the spiritual life, the beginning of the spiritual life proper: Dowel. The transition from Dowel to Dobet is the transition from Action to Contemplation; this is indicated in Passus xv, the Prologue to Dobet, though Langland is careful also to indicate that the good works of the Active Life do not cease to be performed.

Now, there are other works which man must perform which are not works of the spiritual life at all. A consideration of this aspect of man's situation gives us the key to the *Visio*. As St. Paul says, '*prius quod animale, deinde quod spirituale*' (1 Cor. xv. 46). Man is not a pure spirit, but a being composed of soul and body. He therefore finds himself compelled to take thought for the needs of the body. This primary necessity gives rise to the arts and crafts—the provision of food and clothing and all those major occupations which absorb most of the energies of men in civil society. We have only to live to become aware of the imperious demands of this necessity: and *necessitas* is the term St. Bernard, for example, uses for this care or love of the body: a necessity *quae urget nos*. It is to these facts of life Holy Church refers in Passus i. 17-57. This necessity must be distinguished—as Lady Holy Church points out—from another form of carnal love which arises from concupiscence and for which the technical term is *Cupiditas*—a cupidity *quae trahit nos*. 'As the normal state of the body is health, so the normal state of the heart is purity', or *simplicitas*. 'It is un-

¹ Dr. Wells already noted this important point in 'The Construction of *Piers Plowman*', *P.M.L.A.*, xlv (1929), 123-40; but it seems to have been largely overlooked by some later writers on the same subject.

² Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

happily a fact that human desire only very rarely observes the limits of either. Instead of remaining canalized in the bed of natural necessity'—within the limits, that is, set out by Holy Church in Passus I. 20–60—'the will goes off in pursuit of useless pleasures; that is, of pleasures not desired because required for the due exercise (*in mesurable manere*) of the functions that preserve life, but pleasures desired for their own sake as pleasures'. That the will has overstepped the limits of natural necessity may be recognized when it has no longer any right reason for its desires: 'For riȝtful reson schulde rewle ȝow alle.'¹

The first stage, then, in the spiritual journey of man is the limiting of his natural appetites, by reason, within the limits of the *necessitas quae urget nos*—'Measure is medicine', as Lady Holy Church says; and the rejection of Lady Meed, *quae trahit nos* by her meretricious beauty. Most of the folk in the field have been drawn to Lady Meed; but guided by Reason, they repent and go to Confession, and then set out in a body to seek St. Truth. Their guide is, appropriately at this stage, a poor ploughman, himself concerned with the provision of the basic necessities of life and whose condition is not one in which he is greatly tempted by cupidity. The way he outlines to Truth is the way of the Commandments, the first stage of the Active Life, the lowest plane of the spiritual life. But having been only just converted from servants of Meed to seekers after Truth, the folk in the field, before they can advance at all, must first be grounded in that carnal love which is of necessity and is therefore legitimate. They must be taught the lesson of Lady Holy Church's opening lines. And so, before the pilgrimage can start, we have in the ploughing of the half-acre an exposition of how the different ranks of society are to be provided with food and clothing in a measurable manner *so that* they may serve God. But the service of God in a positive fashion has not yet begun.

Two points may be noted at the end of B. Passus VI:

(a) It is true that Piers began by outlining a way to Truth; it is, however, merely the beginning of the way, the way of the Commandments, the way of those who, as Guillaume de St. Thierry says, 'being either moved by authority or stirred by example . . . approve the good as set before them without understanding it'.² The next stage is where the spiritual life proper begins, when a man starts to progress along this way by beginning to understand the import of some of the truths in which he believes (an understanding that comes to Piers only as a result of Truth's 'Pardon', at the very end

¹ B. I. 54. See E. Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard* (tr. London, 1955), pp. 40–42, to which I am much indebted in this paragraph.

² *The Golden Epistle of Abbot William of St. Thierry*, tr. Shewring, ed. Dom Justin McCann (London, 1930), p. 27. Cf. Ruysbroeck, *The Seven Steps of the Ladder of Spiritual Love*, tr. F. Sherwood Taylor (London, 1943), pp. 40–43.

of the *Visio*). Thus he moves from the *animale* to the *spirituale*, and becomes a 'rational' man in the spiritual life, as Guillaume puts it. And he moves forward, not merely by the practice of virtues, but 'by the progressive understanding of himself and of those things which in the teaching of the faith have been laid before him'.¹ This development takes place during the long debates of the *Vita de Dowel*.

(b) The second point to be noted is that the pilgrimage outlined by Piers does *not*, in fact, take place in the *Visio*. The reason is, I think, because the reform of society is not possible on a corporate basis: it is achieved when each individual reforms himself. For Langland, Christian society is the Church; and the reform of the Christian is the beginning and growth of a truly fervent spiritual life. Now the spiritual life by definition is the *inner* life of the individual. This pilgrimage to Truth must be made by each of the folk on his own. It is the *Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest*.

The Pardon episode in Passus VII seems to be clearly a call by God to Piers to lead a truly spiritual life—to move on from the way of the Commandments: to do well, in the sense in which St. Gregory and St. Bernard, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure would interpret *bona agere*: to spend more time in prayer and penance; that is, to progress in Charity by the mortification of desires and the practice of virtue. And the message seems to bring to Piers in a flash a new understanding of old truths: *Fuerunt michi lacrimae mee panes die ac nocte. . . . Ne solliciti sitis. . . .* The Pardon initiates a new kind of pilgrimage: the progress of the soul in the spiritual life.

The *Visio*, then, is concerned with the *animalis homo* and with the first stage in his regeneration. The *Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest* is concerned with the spiritual life proper. And at the end of Dowel, the people in the plain of Passus v are recalled in the person of Haukyn;² and we are reminded that the pilgrimage to Truth has been, in fact, for some time under way, but in a different mode—the only possible one. In this manner, the two parts of the poem are intimately bound together as one whole.

III

We now come to consider the significance in the poem of the threefold distinction of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest. The poet has guided us here by a number of definitions, for the *Vita* begins with the Dreamer's search for Dowel and his questioning of various characters as to its nature. The definitions which are given may be divided into two main classes. Outside this division fall two definitions which may be termed accidental, and one

¹ *The Golden Epistle*, p. 28.

² On the relationship between Passus XIII, XIV, and the *Visio*, see the very stimulating article by Stella Maguire, 'The Significance of Haukyn, *Activa Vita*, in *Piers Plowman*', *R.E.S.*, xxv (1949), 97-109.

rather mysterious definition given by Piers Plowman, who reappears in the *Vita de Dobet* as a symbolic figure, representing the human nature of Christ.¹

First, to consider the two definitions which I have termed 'accidental', since they define Dowel in a particular case. The first of these is the tentative definition of the Dreamer towards the end of Passus XI. Dowel, he says, 'is to see much and suffer more'. Ymagynatyf, who has just appeared, tells him that if he *had* suffered, Reason would have further explained to him what had already been told him by Clergye. There is clearly no finality about this definition.² The second comes in Passus XIV where Conscience identifies Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest with the three parts of the sacrament of Penance—Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction.³ The meaning appears to be that at this stage the sacrament of Penance is what is most essential for Haukyn. For the sinful man, regeneration begins with this sacrament, which restores the infused virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, to the soul.⁴ And we note that immediately afterwards Conscience does in fact begin to exhort Haukyn to a higher life, to Patience, Poverty, and Charity—to the life to which Piers Plowman was called in the *Visio*, by the 'Pardon'.

To turn now to the two main classes of definitions. The first class consists of:

1. Definition of Friars, VIII. 18 ff.
2. Definitions of Wit, IX. 94-97; 199-206.
3. Definitions of Study, X. 129-34; 187-8.
4. Definitions of Ymagynatyf, XII. 30-40.
5. Definitions of Patience, XIII. 136-71.

All develop the first definition of the Friars, for all define Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest as growth in Charity. Patience's definitions not merely end this series, but end the whole series (apart from a reference to Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest in the life of Christ in Passus XIX. 104-93). These definitions, then, furnish one aspect—and the chief aspect—of the threefold division of the second poem in the *Liber de Petro Plowman*. The *Vita* is essentially concerned with spiritual reform; this must be the spiritual progress of the individual. We have reference here, then, to the distinction of three main stages in the Christian's progress in the love of God, whether considered, as St. Bonaventure considers them in his book *De Triplici Vita*,

¹ Piers's definition is reported by Clergye, B. XIII. 118-29.

² B. XI. 398-429.

³ XIV. 16-24.

⁴ See, for example, Uthred of Boldon, *De perfectione vivendi*: 'Man's *via* is twofold: (1) of first innocence, (2) of *reparacio gracios*a through Christ. By sin, man was wounded in his natural and intellectual powers, and despoiled of gratuitous and moral virtues (cf. *Sent.* dist. ii, c. xxv); by penitence the theological virtues are regained. Perfection consists in the practice of the three theological virtues.' (Summary by Pantin, *Studies . . . Presented to F. M. Powicke*, p. 375.)

as the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way, and the Unitive Way; or, in the terms of an earlier distinction, the condition of *incipientes*, of *proficientes*, and of *perfecti*. The Purgative Way of St. Bonaventure is concerned with the expulsion of error and sin, and leads to peace; the Illuminative Way is concerned with the deeper knowledge and more exact imitation of Our Lord; the Unitive Way is the achievement of union with God through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

The second class of definitions comprises:

1. those given by Thought in VIII. 78-102;
2. Wit's first definition—leading on from Thought—in IX. 11-16;
3. the definitions given by Clergye in X. 230-65;
4. the definitions of the Doctor, XIII. 115-17.

To these may be added the distinction of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest in the life of Christ, XIX. 104-93.

In considering Langland's point of view in these definitions, we shall be helped by recalling that the phrase 'Contemplative Life' may also denote a manner of corporate living ordered to the primary end of facilitating and promoting the exercise of contemplation; such a state of life is created by the stable observance of the evangelical counsels, by means of vows, publicly taken. This objective state is referred to juridically as 'religion' and the members of such a society as 'religious'.¹ The contemplative life is not the exclusive prerogative of such persons; but in virtue of their vows they are constituted in an objective state of perfection: *in statu perfectionis acquirendae*.² Hence they are in the *Vita de Dobet*, but they are not the only persons there: Langland never identifies the *Vita de Dobet* with the religious state. (See Passus xv, Prologue to *Dobet*.)

A higher state than the religious life is the office of a bishop or abbot or other ecclesiastical prelate. This is the most perfect state of all. And here we come to the *only* sense in which the majority of the doctors will use the notion of a 'Mixed' life of action and contemplation. As we have seen, the contemplative life as actually lived—even in religion—is a mixed life; but the relation between Action and Contemplation in the life of a prelate is a very special one. The function of a prelate is to exercise *spiritual* authority: it is, therefore, as John of Freiburg expresses it, a *magisterium perfectionis* and presupposes perfection.³ That is to say, it ought to be the overflowing

¹ These canonical terms had already become colloquial by the fourteenth century. Langland frequently uses them: see, for example, B. x. 312-13.

² St. Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, II-II. clxxxiv. 5.

³ 'Status religionis ad professionem pertinet quasi quedam via tendendi in perfectionem. Status autem episcopalis ad perfectionem pertinet tanquam quoddam perfectionis magisterium'. Joannes de Friburgo, *Summa Confessorum*, lib. III, titl. xxviii, questio iiiii. Cf. *S.T.* loc. cit., art. 7.

of contemplation. *Contemplata tradere* is the phrase St. Thomas uses of true ecclesiastical government,¹ and the phrase is often repeated in the *Specula* and *Compendia* used in the fourteenth century. Hence a prelate is said to be constituted in *statu perfectionis acquisitae*: in the *Vita de Dobest*.

Priests with the care of souls share in the authority of the bishop; but since they may resign their care at any time (and he may not, unless in very exceptional circumstances), they are not constituted in an objective state of perfection. Juridically, they are in the Active Life. However, by reason of their functions they are bound to be in a subjective state of perfection.² Hence we meet them often in the *Vita de Dowel*; but their functions are discussed with those of religious in the Prologue to *Dobest*.

Walter Hilton inevitably comes in here; but I suggest that in regard to the meaning of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest he will bring only confusion. In the *Scale of Perfection*, written for a religious sister, Hilton distinguishes merely two kinds of life, the Active and the Contemplative. In his treatise *Mixed Life*, written for a wealthy man living in the world and apparently exercising a good deal of temporal sovereignty, Hilton seems to liken his reader's state to that of a bishop; and in thus confounding the two, seems to deny to prelates the most perfect state of all.³ This may be a compliment to his reader; or it may be simply an example of somewhat loose thinking in a popular treatise.⁴ Whatever the explanation, Hilton's concept of the Mixed Life seems not to be found in Langland: a surer guide to Langland's view is given in the extract from the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, quoted by Dr. Wells.⁵

If we now consider the second class of definitions of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest, we may see, foreshadowed in them, the blending in the structure of the *Vita* of the two traditional concepts; the three stages of the soul's progress in the love of God, and the three objective states of life—the Active Life, the Religious Life, and the Life of Prelates.

¹ S.T. II-II. clxxxiv and clxxxv.

² S.T. II-II. clxxxiv. 8.

³ Walter Hilton, *Mixed Life*, ed. D. Jones in *Minor Works of Walter Hilton* (London, 1929), ch. v, 16-17; ch. vi, 22-23. S. S. Hussey clearly illustrates the discrepancy between Hilton and Langland (loc. cit., esp. pp. 135-7, 139-42). Mr. Hussey, however, is surely mistaken in treating Hilton's definition as authoritative: as he notes himself, St. Gregory 'recognized all three lives although he never called the mixed life by that name' (p. 135). So did many other doctors, whose views St. Thomas synthesizes in S.T. II-II. clxxxix-clxxxii. For a writer contemporary with Langland in the same tradition, see Uthred of Boldon in Pantin, op. cit., pp. 374-80.

⁴ It is unlikely that Hilton is here recalling an earlier definition of the Mixed Life given by St. Augustine, discussed and dismissed—as an unnecessary distinction—by St. Thomas, S.T. II-II. clxxxix, 'Of the division of life into the Active and the Contemplative'. See also Butler, op. cit., pp. 291-304.

⁵ H. W. Wells in *P.M.L.A.*, xlv. (1929), 134-5. The passage is from cap. xlv. See Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, tr. Sister M. Emmanuel, O.S.B. (London, 1934), pp. 219-20.

Thought distinguishes the three objective states clearly. In Wit's first definition, Dowel and Dobet are defined in subjective terms, but Dobest is 'a bisschopes pere' (ix. 14). We are moving towards the more important concept, that of progress in love; and Wit's further definitions in Passus ix belong to this class. Clergye again defines Dowel and Dobet in general fashion—the contemplative life is not the special prerogative of religious nor of priests—but Dobest includes 'alle manere prelates' (x. 267). The Doctor's definition in Passus xiii is a general statement of the three juridical states, as we might have expected.

From this examination, it seems that Langland begins in the *Vita* by indicating the pilgrimage of the soul towards God. The first stage in the spiritual life of any individual is an emergence alike from intellectual error and moral disorder. This is the *Vita de Dowel*. I have earlier referred to the dissipation of intellectual error in the first part of *Dowel*, Passus viii–xii. In Passus xiii we meet moral disorder in the person of Haukyn, and the situation described in Passus v is recalled. As in Passus v, but now in a more explicit manner, this disorder is repaired by the sacrament of Penance. The moral virtues which will sustain Haukyn and also help him to make progress are put before him: Poverty, or the spirit of poverty in some degree; and Patience.¹

With the Prologue to *Dobet* (Passus xv) we have already progressed. Priests and religious come in for a large share of the discussion, for they make proclamation of leading the contemplative life. Langland summarizes the discussion conducted through Passus x–xii on the place of Learning in the good life and applies the conclusions to the obligations of the clergy in Christian society. The highest evangelical ideal of poverty, put by Patience before Haukyn, is here presented in practice, in the lives of religious, anchorites, and hermits.

We are thus led on to a more comprehensive view of Charity in the *Vita*

¹ Of Patience, St. Gregory says: 'Perfection springs out of patience. He that maintains patience possesses his soul, in that henceforth he is endued with strength to encounter all adversities so that by overcoming himself he is made master of himself.' (*Morals on Job*, v. 33. Oxford tr. i. 266–7.) Echoed by St. Thomas in *S.T.* II–II. cxxxvi. 2, ad 2. Langland has already brought out that it is the hardships of life which make it difficult for Haukyn to keep from deadly sin. There is another reference in St. Thomas to Patience which seems to indicate the background of Langland's mind here and the link which binds Passus xiii and xiv with v and vi: 'The inclination of reason', St. Thomas says, 'would prevail in human nature in the state of integrity. But in fallen nature the inclination of concupiscence prevails, because it is dominant in man. Hence man is more prone to bear evils for the sake of goods in which the concupiscence delights here and now, than to endure evils for the sake of goods to come which are desired in accordance with reason; and yet it is this that pertains to true patience.' (*S.T.* II–II. cxxxvi. 3 ad 1. Dominican tr.) Here we have the point of Reason's entry into the vision of Meed (Passus iv); and of Reason's sermon in Passus v, leading to repentance. Now, Patience is put forward as the virtue which will render his teaching stable and make progress along the road to Truth possible.

de Dobet. Perfection is represented in the redemption wrought by Christ and is rightly conceived as a growth in Faith, Hope, and Charity in the speech of the Samaritan. Piers Plowman appears as the human nature which the Wisdom of God assumed to redeem mankind.

Then, instead of leading us on to the third stage of the spiritual life, as do Rolle and Hilton, Tauler and Suso, the mystical stage in which the Holy Ghost works unimpeded in the soul, the poet, in the *Vita de Dobest*, quietly turns—as the definitions of Wit and Clergye had foreshadowed—to the third objective state, the life of prelates.

There is no sharp break. There is a gradual moving away from the figure of the Dreamer's progress during the latter part of *Dobet* to the meaning for all men of the Passion and Death of Christ. This is reflected in the objective fashion in which these events are narrated. After the Samaritan's speech to the Dreamer, the objective tone becomes apparent and continues right through Passus XVIII. There the language takes fire, as Langland describes the Redemption by Christ and the Harrowing of Hell in memorable verse, ending with the debate between Mercy and Truth, Peace and Righteousness—a debate traditional since St. Bernard but which again Langland re-tells in his own way. Then, in the *Vita de Dobest*, while dedicating Passus XIX to the activity of the Holy Ghost and thereby indicating one aspect of Dobest, Langland describes how the Holy Ghost through the agency of Piers builds up the structure of the Church. For unlike Tauler and Suso and Hilton, Langland's concern is not with religious sisters, but with Christian Society. Piers in XIX and XX represents the ideal pope, in whom Christ continues to be represented on earth; and our attention is drawn to the government of the Church. The blending of the two traditional triple distinctions in the concepts of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest has been extremely well done; and it has been made to serve the poet's purpose in the poem.

The beginning of Dowel is love; by love, love is increased, until we come to the perfection of love, which is Dobet; while Dobest is superabundant love, overflowing into the works of the apostolate, cultivating the Christian life in the souls of men and raising the edifice of the Church. Such is the ideal. And it is a traditional one. Almost at once, in Passus XX, Langland recalls the real: the siege-scarred Christendom of his own time, first pictured in the Prologue. And the poem ends with the poet going out into the world to seek, apparently, a true pope who will effect a reform: the Piers Plowman described in *Dobest*.

ELIZABETHAN THEMES IN *THE MISFORTUNES OF ARTHUR*

By WILLIAM A. ARMSTRONG

I

MOST interpreters of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the play devised by Thomas Hughes and other lawyers for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Gray's Inn on 28 February 1588, appear to regard it as little more than a sedulous imitation of Seneca's tragedies. In his introduction to the play, J. W. Cunliffe asserts that it 'seems impossible to carry the borrowing of Senecan material further' and that 'such wholesome [*sic*] borrowing carried its own punishment in the defeat of its purpose—unless that purpose were merely to impress a courtly audience with the author's familiarity with Seneca'.¹ Similarly, C. F. Tucker Brooke claims that Hughes 'far exceeds his predecessors in servile imitation',² and, in a recent book, A. P. Rossiter dismisses the tragedy as one which carries 'Seneca-pillagings to a final excess'.³ The purpose of this article is to argue that the imitation of Seneca in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is much less servile than has been maintained, that its main themes are usurpation, ambition, civil war, tyranny, kingship, and the fate of the commonweal, and that these themes are treated in a distinctively Elizabethan manner.

The Senecan themes in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* can, I believe, be specified as follows: (a) the theme of a royal family doomed to expiate its sins; (b) the use of Senecan precepts concerning good and bad conduct in dialogues between major characters and wise subordinates; (c) the repetition of Senecan opinions about Fortune, worldly goods, and death at significant moments in the action of the play. The first of these themes is by far the most important of Hughes's borrowings from Seneca. Just as Seneca's Atreus and Agamemnon follow the evil ways of their progenitor, Pelops, so are Hughes's Arthur and Mordred tainted by the sins of Uther Pendragon. Uther committed adultery with the wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and soon afterwards killed him. The son of this unlawful union, Arthur, committed incest with his twin sister, Anne. His sin thus resembles that of Seneca's Oedipus. Mordred, the son of Arthur and Anne, commits adultery with Arthur's wife, Guenevora, and usurps his rule over Britain while he is fighting abroad. Hence the offences of Mordred and Guenevora

¹ *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford, 1912), p. xci.

² *The Tudor Drama* (London, 1912), p. 195.

³ *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans* (London, 1950), p. 135.

resemble those of Seneca's Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. When Arthur returns, Mordred and he deal one another mortal wounds in a great battle. Hughes's manipulation of his source-material shows that he was anxious to secure these Senecan resemblances. Unlike his main source, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, he interprets Uther's treatment of Gorlois as a sin. Geoffrey, moreover, does not represent Mordred as the offspring of an incestuous union, nor does he state that Arthur and Mordred killed one another; Hughes probably took these details from Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. At the outset of the play the Ghost of Gorlois is thus able to link the crimes of Uther with those of Arthur and Mordred and to prophesy the destruction of the house of Pendragon:

Thus, thus *Pendragons* seede so sowne and reapte,
Thus cursed imps, ill borne, and worse consum'd,
Shall render iust reuenge for parents crimes,
And penance due t'asswadge my swelling wrath.¹

Even in this most Senecan theme, however, alien elements intrude. The vengeful Ghost of Gorlois, for instance, though modelled in part on the Ghost of Tantalus in *Thyestes*,² shows an interest in the fate of the nation which has no counterpart in Seneca's tragedies. Though Seneca's protagonists are royal, his tragedies can be described as domestic, because he is chiefly concerned with the effects of evil passion on families, not the state. Hughes, on the other hand, deliberately links the fate of the British nation to that of the dynasty of Pendragon when Gorlois cries:

Let traiterous *Mordred* keepe his sire from shoare.
Let *Bryttaine* rest a pray for forreine powers,
Let sworde and fire still fedde with mutuall strife
Tourne all the Kings to ghoastes, let ciuill warres
And discorde swell till all the realme be torne. (I. i. 38-42)

The topics mentioned here—treason, civil war, and their dire effects upon the nation—are steadily elaborated during the course of the play, and eventually make its ethos more like that of a chronicle play than a Senecan tragedy. The Ghost's concluding prophecy of an age of peace and wealth for Britons under the reign of Elizabeth works to the same end, though it consorts oddly with the Senecan vengefulness of his earlier diatribes.

Hughes's treatment of Queen Guenevora likewise shows that non-Senecan impulses are at work even in those parts of the play which are closest to the themes of Seneca's tragedies. In the second and third scenes of the play, Guenevora's passions of rage and grief are expressed in words

¹ *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. i. 50-53, in *Early English Classical Tragedies*, ed. J. W. Cunliffe (Oxford, 1912). All ensuing references to the play are to this edition.

² See Cunliffe's note, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

often translated directly from Seneca,¹ but by the end of the third scene she has acknowledged 'iust remorse' for the 'mightie error' of her love for Mordred and has decided to become a nun and do 'dayly pennance' for her sins. There is no Senecan parallel to this repentance. Hughes, indeed, makes much more of Guenevora's withdrawal from the world than Geoffrey of Monmouth, who merely notes that 'despairing of success' after the return of Arthur, the queen 'resolved to lead a chaste life' and became a nun.² Even more significant is the outcome of the following episode, which begins with a series of passages translated from the scene in Seneca's *Agamemnon* in which Aegisthus persuades Clytemnestra to abandon her hopes of being reconciled to her husband and to continue to link her fortunes with his,³ but ends with Guenevora's speaking as a loyal subject, not a rebellious adulteress, for, unlike Clytemnestra, she rejects her former paramour and denounces his political crime:

It seru'd your turne, t'usurpe your fathers Crowne, (I. iv. 52)

and blames him, by implication, for the national disaster which seems imminent:

Troy still had stodee,
Had not her Prince made light of wedlocks lore. (I. iv. 64-65)

She then makes her final exit; the fading resemblance of the play to Seneca's *Agamemnon* ends, and the rest of the action is primarily concerned with the national consequences of Mordred's political ambition and his usurpation of the crown.

II

As most political theorists of the Tudor period believed that kings were divinely appointed, they regarded the usurpation of a crown as an affront to God which was likely to bring a catastrophic punishment upon the offender. In their opinion, a usurper was *ipso facto* a tyrant. Even if he ruled well, he deserved to be attacked with impunity because of his defective title to the throne.⁴ The eminent Elizabethan lawyer, Sir Thomas Smith, soberly notes that 'one may be a tyrant by his entrie and getting of the governement'.⁵ Similarly, Francis Bacon, who helped to devise the

¹ Cunliffe, pp. 328-31.

² 'Quod ut ganhumare / regine nuntiatum est. confestim sibi desperans. ab eboraco ad urbem legionum diffugit. atque in templo iullii martiris inter monachas earum vitam suscepit. & caste uiuere proposuit.' *The 'Historia Regum Britanniae' of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Acton Griscom (London, 1929), bk. xi, ch. i, p. 498.

³ Cunliffe, pp. 328-31.

⁴ I have documented these beliefs in 'The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant', *R.E.S.*, xxii (1946), 166-7.

⁵ *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. L. Alston (Cambridge, 1906), p. 15. Written in 1565, this treatise was first published in 1583.

dumb shows in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, later described Richard III as 'Richard the third of that name, King in fact onely, but Tyrant both in title and regiment'.¹ Mordred is a tyrant in this dual Elizabethan sense of the word. Hughes emphasizes heavily the tyranny of Mordred's 'entrie and getting of the governement', for he refers to his usurpation of the throne with significant persistency. There are no less than nine passages in the play in which the terms 'usurper', 'usurped', or 'usurpation' are used to describe Mordred or his activities.² Correspondingly, the Chorus rebukes those Britons who have accepted Mordred's illegal rule:

O wretched state in *Brytaines* fond,
What needed they to stoope to *Mordred's* yoke,
Or feare the man themselves so fearefull made?
(iv. iii. ch., 18-20)

Mordred echoes the fears of Seneca's Lycus when he gloomily acknowledges that

The wrongfull Scepter's held with trembling hand, (i. iv. 94)³

but the discussion shifts from a Senecan to an Elizabethan context when Mordred later tries to draw confidence from the argument that

Ech Crowne is made of that attractiue moulde
'That of it selfe it drawes a full defence, (ii. ii. 89-90)

and Conan incisively replies,

That is a iust, and no vsurped Crowne.
And better were an exiles life, then thus
Disloyally to wronge your Sire and Liedge.
Thinke not that impious crimes can prosper long,
A time they scape, in time they be repaide. (ii. ii. 91-95)

This retort epitomizes the Elizabethan attitude towards usurpation; obedience is due only to the 'just' crown obtained by lawful succession: usurpation is an impious crime which will certainly be punished. The fifth dumb show of the play—possibly the work of Francis Bacon—faithfully symbolizes this attitude. It requires a gentleman in black to walk across the stage, 'bearing in the one hande a broken piller, at the toppe thereof the Crowne and Scepter of the vanquisht King, both broken asunder, representing the conquest ouer vsurpation. . . .' (p. 283, ll. 27-30). In quality as well as in quantity, Hughes's references to usurpation are Elizabethan, not Senecan.

¹ *The Moral and Historical Works of Lord Bacon* (London, 1852), p. 307.

² *The Misfortunes*, 'The argument . . .', p. 224, l. 22; i. iv. 52; i. iv. 106; i. iv. Chorus, 15; ii. ii. 91; iii. iii. 34; Fourth Dumb Show, p. 271, l. 13; iv. ii. 116; Fifth Dumb Show, p. 283, l. 30.

³ Cunliffe quotes the corresponding passage from *Hercules Furens* on p. 333.

Two of Seneca's characters, Lycus and Eteocles,¹ are represented as tyrants dominated by ambition, but Hughes portrays the master-passion of Mordred with a much greater range and complexity of detail. Mordred is, indeed, the most detailed study in ambition to be found in Tudor drama before Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Hughes applies the terms 'ambition' or 'ambitious' to the motives and actions of Mordred almost as often as he refers to him as a usurper.² The special emphasis which he gives to the motive of political ambition is apparent in 'The argument of the Tragedie', where he states that during Arthur's absence 'Mordred grew ambitious, for th'affecting whereof he made loue to Guenevora, who gaue eare vnto him' (p. 224, l. 20). He thus represents Mordred's interest in the queen as the mercenary result of his political aspirations. He deliberately altered his source-material to give this impression, for the corresponding passage in Geoffrey of Monmouth suggests no causal connexion of this kind, merely stating that Mordred 'by tyrannical and treasonable practices set the crown upon his own head', and that 'Queen Guanhumara in violation of her first marriage, was wickedly married to him'.³ Unlike Seneca's Aegisthus, Mordred is impelled by love of rule rather than love of a queen.

Throughout the play, moreover, Hughes's portrayal of Mordred's ambition corresponds closely in outline and detail to the way in which this passion was described by the moralizing psychologists of the sixteenth century. Combining Christian and classical ideas, most of these writers condemn ambition as a passion which displaces the rule of reason in the microcosm, takes control of the will, and drives its victim into treason, rebellion, and other criminal excesses. A well-known French moralist of the period, Peter de la Primaudaye, describes ambition in Aristotelian fashion as 'a pernicious passion', as 'an unreasonable desire to enjoy honours, estates, and great places', as 'a vice of excess'.⁴ Mordred exhibits the reckless extremities of this passion when he exclaims,

I hate a peere,
I loath, I yrke, I doe detest a head,
B't *Nature*, be it *Reason*, be it *Pride*,
I loue to rule: my minde nor with, nor by,
Nor after any claimes, but chiefe and first, (I. iv. 113-16)

¹ Lycus appears in *Hercules Furens*, Eteocles in the unfinished *Phoenissae*.

² The words 'ambition' and 'ambitious' are applied to Mordred seven times in *The Misfortunes*: 'The argument . . .', p. 224, l. 20; First Dumb Show, p. 225, l. 16; II. iv. Chorus, 21; III. iv. Chorus, 17; v. i. 107, 130; v. ii. Epilogus, 11.

³ '... ejusdem diademate per tyrannidem et prodicionem insignitum esse; reginamque Ganhumaram, violato jure priorum nuptiarum, eidem nefanda Venere copulatam esse.' Ed. cit., bk. x, ch. xiii, p. 496.

⁴ *The French Academie*, tr. by T. B. (London, 1589), pp. 211-12. Written in French in 1577, this influential treatise was first published in its English translation in 1586.

and his rejection of reason and the happy mean is made explicit when he tells Gawin,

You loue the meane, and follow vertues race:
I like the top, and aime at greater blisse.
You rest content, my minde aspires to more. (II. iii. 131-3)

As one of Hughes's collaborators, William Fulbecke, wrote in a treatise composed shortly before the play, 'all excesse and defect properly taken is a vice, and all excesse and defect, as Aristotle saith, is to be shunned'.¹ To the Aristotelian moralist, courage, rightly understood, is the mean between cowardice and rashness. La Primaudaye describes how ambitious men 'flatter themselves in furious and frantike actions',² and when Gildas narrates Mordred's savage fight against Arthur's army, he distinguishes its rashness from true courage:

O frantike fury, farre from Valures praise. (IV. ii. 137)

Of the several other characteristics which Mordred has in common with the ambitious man of the Renaissance moralists, two may suffice. La Primaudaye observes that 'if Right (say ambitious men) may be violated, it is to be violated for a kingdome'.³ The same casuistry is used by Mordred when he asserts that

since a wrong must be, then it excels
When 'tis to gaine a Crowne. (I. iv. 111-12)

For all their condemnation of ambition, some Renaissance moralists regarded it as a failing peculiar to great minds. 'It lodgeth only in great mindes, euen in the Angells themselves',⁴ wrote Pierre Charron. This idea was made current in England by Nicholas Grimald's translation of Cicero's *De Officiis*, which notes that 'desires of honour, rule, power, and glory be cōmonly in the greatest corages and goodliest wittes'.⁵ This opinion runs counter to Seneca's Stoic contempt for passion. Hughes evidently accepted it, however, for he sees a certain grandeur in Mordred's death:

There Mordred fell, but like a Prince he fell.
And as a braunch of great *Pendragons* grafted
His life breaths out, his eyes forsake the Sunne,
And fatall Cloudes inferre a lasting Clips. (IV. ii. 224-7)

This epic touch is the more interesting because it is Hughes's addition to certain details borrowed from Malory⁶ and because it anticipates the heroic

¹ *A Booke of christian Ethicks* (London, 1587), p. C4g.

² *The French Academie*, p. 212.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁴ *Of Wisdome*, tr. by Sampson Lennard (London, 1612), p. 81.

⁵ *Marcus Tullius Ciceroes thre bookes of duties* (London, 1556), f. 11r.

⁶ The relevant passage by Malory is quoted by Cunliffe, p. 340.

colouring in the portrayal of such stage tyrants as Tamburlaine and Macbeth.

Seneca's influence upon the presentation of Mordred is strongest in the passages of stichomythic dialogue between Mordred and Conan about good and bad rule. In Act II, Scene ii, Hughes certainly draws heavily upon passages of the same kind in Seneca's *Troades* and *Octavia* in order to represent Mordred as a tyrant who prefers cruelty to clemency, licence to laws, might to right, and the fear of subjects to their love.¹ The debt to Seneca in these dialectics is undeniable, but it is equally certain that Mordred's chief crime is rebellion and that it is interpreted in a manner deriving neither from Seneca nor from Geoffrey of Monmouth but from Tudor sources. *The Misfortunes of Arthur* contains many ideas and images concerning rebellion. Almost every one of them has its counterpart in Tudor sermons on the same subject, particularly the famous *Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*, composed by certain Anglican bishops and published in 1571. As we have seen, it is Mordred's ambition which drives him to oppose his lawful king; correspondingly, the homilists point to ambition, 'the unlawful and restless desire in men to be of higher estate than God hath given or appointed unto them',² as one of the two principal causes of rebellion. One of their favourite examples of ambition is Absalom,³ whose conspiracy and rebellion against his father, King David, are paralleled by Mordred's attempt upon his father's crown. Another example of rebelliousness whom they often cite is Catiline.⁴ Correspondingly, the rebellion of Mordred is compared to that of 'lewde Cateline' by the Ghost of Gorlois (p. 295, l. 14).⁵ To the homilists, rebellion is the worst kind of war because it is liable to end in the destruction of the entire state; 'all the calamities, miseries, and mischiefs of war', they write, 'be more grievous and do more follow rebellion than any other war', adding that 'our Saviour Christ denounceth desolation and destruction to that realm that by rebellion and sedition is divided in itself'.⁶ The same sentiments are expressed by Gildas when he points out the difference between 'woonted warres' and Mordred's rebellion:

What there did reache but to a Souldiers death,
Contains the death of all a Nation here, (iv. iii. 21-22)

¹ Cunliffe indicates the Senecan sources of these sentiments, pp. 334-5.

² *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (London, 1864, printed for The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), p. 626.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 618-19. See also *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer* (Cambridge, 1846), p. 188.

⁴ See Cranmer, *op. cit.*, p. 196; also *A Lamentation in whiche is shewed what Ruynes and destruction cometh of seditious rebellyon* (London, 1536), p. B. ii(c). This treatise has been ascribed to Sir John Cheke.

⁵ The speech in which this phrase occurs was written by William Fulbecke.

⁶ *Certain Sermons*, p. 614.

and emphasizes its suicidal character:

The fruite of ciuill warres:

A Kingdom's hand hath goard a Kingdom's heart. (iv. iii. 24-25)

A country weakened by rebellion, said the preachers, was 'ready to be a prey and spoil to all outward enemies that will invade it'.¹ Gildas draws the same moral when he laments that

The *Scots* may now their inrodes olde renew,

The *Saxons* well may vow their former clames,

And *Danes* without their danger driue vs out. (iv. iii. 14-16)

One of the most shocking results of civil war, according to the homilists, was the turning of brother against brother, father against son, causing 'the brother to seek and often to work the death of his brother, the son of the father; the father to seek or procure the death of his sons. . .'.¹ This theme, too, is faithfully expounded by the play. Describing the horrors of the battle between Arthur and Mordred, the Nuntius tells how

The brethren broach their bloud: the Sire his Sonnes,

The Sonne againe would proue by too much Wrath,

That he, whom thus he slew, was not his Sire.

No blood nor kinne can swage their irefull moods. (iv. ii. 170-3)

When the Nuntius describes the slaughter of commoners as well as aristocrats in the battle—'There Prince and Peasant both lay hurle on heapes' (iv. ii. 146)—he is again echoing the homilists, who speak of 'the great and horrible murders of infinite multitudes and thousands of the common people slain in rebellion'.² The most solemn warning issued to would-be rebels by these Elizabethan preachers reminds them of 'the eternal damnation that is prepared for all impenitent rebels in hell with Satan, the first founder of rebellion and grand captain of all rebels'.³ Mordred is an impenitent of this kind:

What though I be a ruine to the Realme

And fall myselfe therewith? (II. iv. 87-88)

he asks, and decides that there could be 'no better end' than

A solemn pompe, and fit for *Mordreds* minde,

To be a graue and tombe to all his Realme. (II. iv. 92-93)

His fate is thus settled and is described by the Ghost of Gorlois when he proclaims that 'Rebelles, Traytors, and conspirators'

Shall feele the flames of euer flaming fire

Which are not quenched with a sea of teares.⁴ (p. 295, ll. 16-17)

¹ *Certain Sermons*, p. 615.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 624-5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 624.

⁴ This speech was written by William Fulbecke.

Few sermons or chronicle plays illustrate Elizabethan doctrines and warnings concerning rebellion and civil war so comprehensively as *The Misfortunes of Arthur*.

III

In his interpretation of Mordred's motives and offences, Hughes has succeeded in combining Senecan and Elizabethan ideas without loss of consistency. In his portrayal of King Arthur, however, there are serious inconsistencies which must be ascribed to an antinomy between the Senecan and Elizabethan elements which went to its making. As we have observed, Hughes tried to give a Senecan quality to his tragedy by adding to themes taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth the notion that Arthur, the descendant of Brut and Uther Pendragon, was a member of a tainted dynasty, guilty of incest, and doomed to expiate the transgressions of his family. Arthur himself draws attention to his ancestry when he describes Britain as the 'seate and bowre of wandring *Brute*' (III. iii. 48), the Nuntius refers to the dead Mordred as 'the hope and braunch of *Brute* suppress' (IV. ii. 234), and Arthur acknowledges the sins of his dynasty when he describes the fate of Mordred and himself as

a mirror to the worlde,
Both of incestious life, and wicked birth. (v. i. 120-1)

The Ghost of Gorlois rounds off this theme in the approved style of his Senecan counterpart when he exultantly announces that

Pendragon, Arthur, Mordred, and their stocke,
Found all their foiles: not one hath scape reuenge:
Their line from first to last quite razed out. (v. ii. 8-10)

Hughes does not permit the house of Pendragon to rest in peace, however. A few lines later the Ghost of Gorlois begins to praise Queen Elizabeth, 'that vertuous *Virgo*', and, despite what he has just said about the destruction of the line of Brut, he describes her as

That pierlesse braunch of *Brute*: that sweet remaine
Of *Priam's* state: that hope of springing Troy. (v. ii. 19-20)

There is a patent and probably deliberate contradiction here. It can be explained by referring to the Tudor conception of the house of Brut and Arthur which has been documented by C. B. Millican and summarized by E. M. W. Tillyard. Millican has shown that during the reign of every Tudor monarch except Queen Mary a series of writers extolled the Tudors as the direct descendants of Brut the Trojan through the line of Uther

Pendragon, King Arthur, Cadwallader, and Owen Tudor.¹ Thomas Churchyard, for instance, describes Queen Elizabeth as

she that sits in reagal Throne,
With Scepter, Sword, and Crowne.
(Who came from *Arthurs* race and lyne).²

Moreover, as Dr. Tillyard points out, Elizabethan propagators of this 'Tudor myth' spread the belief that Queen Elizabeth was King Arthur reincarnate and that she would restore the golden age because it had been prophesied that Arthur would do so when he returned.³ Hence Hughes is subscribing to this flattering tradition not only when he describes Queen Elizabeth as the descendant of Brut but also when he hails her as one who will

reduce the golden age againe,
Religion, ease, and wealth of former world. (v. ii. 23-24)

The introduction of these widely accepted Tudor beliefs into the play obviously contradicts and depreciates its Senecan theme of the doomed dynasty. The Tudor myth also seems to have affected Hughes's characterization of Arthur, for he is more often described as a paragon of princely virtues than as a sinful member of a tainted stock. Gawin, for instance, sets up Arthur as a model king when he advises Mordred to strive to emulate his valour and fame (II. iii. 26-28). Once Arthur has decided to fight Mordred for the recovery of his realm, he displays several of the attributes of a *speculum principis*. When his men are dismayed by the storm, he restores their confidence with his oratory (IV. ii. 75-76). In battle, he displays the Aristotelian courage praised by Tudor moralists, a 'moderate fear' (v. ii. 152) in contrast to Mordred's 'frantike fury, far from Vallures praise' (IV. ii. 137). Conan praises him as 'the Realmes defence' (IV. iii. 37), the Chorus as the 'pillar of our state' (v. i. 16), and even when he is dying Arthur shows a patriarchal concern for his people by ordering his death to be concealed from their foreign foes,

so that in euery Coast
I still be feard, and lookt for euery houre. (v. i. 177-8)

This hint at the legend of Arthur's return is yet another link between the play and the Tudor myth.

The special failing which Hughes attributes to King Arthur derives from a different source, but it, too, illustrates the connexion between the play and Elizabethan ideals of kingship. This failing is the one described by Tudor moralists as 'lenity', or 'indulgency'; or 'wrong pity'. It is discussed

¹ *Spenser and the Table Round* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), pp. 7-105.

² Quoted by Millican, p. 39.

³ *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944), pp. 30-31.

by Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Governour*¹ and described in the *Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*,² but the most apt illustration of it occurs in the eloquent petition addressed by the Anglican bishops to Queen Elizabeth on 26 May 1572, urging her to execute Mary Queen of Scots, and warning her against leniency. 'David', they wrote, 'having this infirmity of too much Pity and Indulgency towards Offenders, which is not of any Prince to be followed, did forbid that his Traiterous Son *Absolom* should be slain; and when he was killed, effeminately he bewailed the same to the discouraging of his People: but he was sharply rebuked by *Joab* his Councillor saying, *Thou hast shamed this day the faces of thy Servants which have saved thy life and the life of thy Sons, &c.*'³ In Act III, Scene i, Arthur is guilty of this fault when he argues that 'Rule oft admitteth ruth' (III. i. 86), and talks of accepting Mordred's usurpation and retiring into private life (III. i. 33-37). In these circumstances, Howell takes on the functions of a Joab and sternly warns his master that there is

No worse a vice then lenitie in kings,
Remisse indulgence soon vndoes a Realme.
He teacheth how to sinne, that winkes at sinnes,
And bids offend, that suffereth an offence. (III. i. 62-65)

Despite much persuasion of this kind, however, Arthur is only spurred into action by Mordred's threats, and his reluctance is represented as a fatal error in the Fifth Dumb Show, in which a wounded pelican symbolizes 'Arthurs too much indulgencie of *Mordred*, the cause of his death' (p. 284, ll. 44-45). This failing is not to be found in Seneca's tragedies nor in Hughes's source-material. Hughes invented this example of it, I believe, as an indirect compliment to Queen Elizabeth for not succumbing to it in her dealings with Mary Queen of Scots, whom she had executed for offences similar to Mordred's almost exactly a year before the play was staged.

If the foregoing arguments are valid, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* must be regarded not as a mere pastiche of Seneca but as a sustained attempt to combine some of his literary conventions with a number of themes of peculiar moment in Elizabethan moral and political thought. As a result, the action of the play is clogged with sententious speeches and dialogues because Hughes moralizes not only about the fate of a tainted family after

¹ *The Governour* (London, 1531), bk. ii, ch. vii.

² *Certain Sermons*, p. 601.

³ *A Compleat Journal of the Votes, Speeches, and Debates of the House of Lords and House of Commons throughout the whole Reign of Queen Elizabeth, of Glorious Memory*, collected by Sir Simon D'Ewes (London, 1693), p. 210. D'Ewes attributes this petition to the House of Commons, but the manuscript in the Public Record Office bears an endorsement by Lord Burghley which proves that it was 'exhibited by y^e Clergy of y^e higher howse'. See *Calendar of Scottish Papers*, ed. William K. Boyd (Edinburgh, 1905), iv. 310.

the manner of Seneca, but also about the national consequences of usurpation, civil war, and the death of a good king. A similar duality of purpose complicates the characterization of the three protagonists. Guenevora changes all too suddenly from a Senecan adulteress to a loyal and repentant subject. Mordred is an even more doctrinaire creation. He expounds some of the maxims of the Senecan tyrant, but is mainly intended to epitomize Elizabethan ideas about ambition and rebellion. Arthur speaks ruefully about the sins of the house of Pendragon but he behaves for the most part like the magnanimous prince whom Elizabethan historians extolled as the illustrious ancestor of their queen. His tragic error is the result of compassion, not a vicious passion of a Senecan kind, and was obviously of topical interest to an audience who had heard Queen Elizabeth accused of it before she hardened her heart against Mary of Scotland. The imperfect fusion of Senecan and Elizabethan elements thus explains obvious faults in the structure and characterization of the play, which is interesting for historical rather than aesthetic reasons. It illustrates a mid-way stage in the process whereby Senecan imitation was subordinated to the wider themes and more flexible conventions of the chronicle play.

DONNE'S 'EPITHALAMION MADE AT LINCOLN'S INN': CONTEXT AND DATE

By DAVID NOVARR

I

That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i. 54-55)

DONNE'S 'Epithalamion made at Lincoln's Inn' differs from his 'Epithalamion . . . on the Lady Elizabeth and Count Palatine' and his epithalamion for the Earl of Somerset in that its occasion is not known. It differs from them, too, in that its wit seems more crudely licentious, harsher, less neatly integrated. This peculiarity of tone has not been entirely unnoticed. Grierson implied that the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion was 'reprehensible' when he coupled it with 'the most reprehensible' of the earlier elegies,¹ and he thought that its third stanza abounded in satire,² though some of the satire disappeared when he retracted his original reading of line 26.³ But Grierson's comments on the poem have been largely neglected despite the fact that it has a number of puzzling elements which disturb the conventional epithalamic attitude.

One of these elements is Donne's reference to death in a marriage poem. This is odd, but the oddness has not disturbed readers unduly, perhaps because Donne refers to death several times in his other epithalamia. In the 'Epithalamion . . . on the Lady Elizabeth', 'The Sparrow that neglects his life for love' is conventional and apt for the occasion—St. Valentine's Day—and we are attracted, not repulsed, by so pleasant a way to die. Donne's suggestion that the noble lovers are a pair of phoenixes, that their 'motion kindles such fires, as shall give / Yong Phoenixes, and yet the old shall live' is delightful for its ingenious invention. His likening of the bride's jewels to a blazing constellation which signifies 'That a Great Princess falls, but does not die' pleases us not so much for the intensity of its visual imagery as for the felicity of its suggestion of the marriage-bed. Again, when Donne announces that 'A Bride, before a good night could be said, / Should vanish from her clothes, into her bed, / As Soules from bodies steale, and are not spy'd', we are delighted by the aptness—and

¹ *The Poems of John Donne* (Oxford, 1912), II. lxxxix, n. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³ *The Poems of John Donne* (Oxford, 1933), 'Note on the Text and Canon', p. 1.

the incongruity—of his analogy. Similarly, in the epithalamion for the Earl of Somerset, Donne's introductory statement that the marriage reprieves the old year, due to die in five days, his reference to the 'death bed' of the year in a poem celebrating the marriage-bed, seems only to enhance the glory of the occasion. In his stanza of benediction, Donne addresses the couple as 'Blest payre of Swans', and he wishes that they never sing until 'new great heights to trie, / It must serve your ambition, to die'. Here the eager desire for heavenly joy is wittily ambiguous; the reference to death is properly improper, and it is followed, properly—and improperly—enough, by the exhortation, 'Raise heires'. In referring to the death of the swan, Donne makes his swans generate life; they are hardly of the breed of the chaste swans greeted by the Jovelings of Spenser. When Donne in his 'good-night' mentions the lamp which burned for fifteen hundred years in Tullia's tomb, it is not the tomb that we remember but the picture of the lovers as everlasting 'love-lamps'. He suggests that fire ends in ashes, but only to contrast the everlastingness of the love of the couple: 'joyes bonfire' burns eternally, for bride and groom are both fuel and fire.

Donne starts the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion by comparing a single bed to a grave: 'It nourseth sadnesse', and the body in it remains in one place. But in his very expression, 'your bodies print / . . . the yielding downe doth dint', Donne looks forward to a 'yielding' of another sort, and, indeed, his next line is 'You and your other you meet there anon'. Later in the poem he exploits a like idea: the marriage-bed is 'onely to virginittie / A grave, but, to a better state, a cradle'. These references to the grave are somewhat blunter than those in the other epithalamia. They are not so audacious, so witty, so lovingly developed. Donne's further references to death in the poem disturb us. One of them is not analogical at all; the other is a revolting analogy. Donne writes

Thy two-leav'd gates faire Temple unfold,
And these two in thy sacred bosome hold,
Till, mystically joyn'd, but one they bee;
Then may thy leane and hunger-starved wombe
Long time expect their bodies and their tombe,
Long after their owne parents fatten thee.

It is conceivable that the church in which a marriage takes place may bring to mind those buried there. It is conceivable, too, that tombs may be mentioned in a wedding poem, but even Tennyson does not escape unscathed from a rather inopportune morbidity in the Epilogue of *In Memoriam*. But Donne does more than suggest that the church will receive the bodies of the lovers. He is hopeful that the lovers' parents will die before they do, and his use of 'fatten' expresses an untoward relish.

This seems like bad taste, but the passage is offensive beyond this. Donne calls the marriage a mystical union, but his words do not communicate a spiritual idea; they undercut it. The 'sacred bosome' of the church does not bother us, but when it is conjoined with 'leane and hunger-starved wombe', we are distressed by the fleshly aspect of the metaphor—all the more so since, after all, we remember the bride standing by while Donne addresses the church. 'Leane and hunger-starved wombe' outrages us not only because of its implication that the church hungers for the death of the bride and groom, but also because we cannot help applying the words to the bride as well as to the church, and cannot help thinking that Donne wants us to do so. And what shall we make of the 'two-leav'd gates'? Our minds withdraw, and not into happiness. We are happier when Donne later compares the bride in her nuptial bed to a pleasing sacrifice on love's altar. But Donne's exploitation of this image is not wittily lascivious; it is grossly cruel. The bride lies like a sacrificial lamb while the bridegroom, like a priest, comes tenderly 'on his knees t'embowell her'. Tenderly? Is this the tenderness of the boudoir or the abattoir?

In each of the epithalamia, too, Donne refers to riches or money, but once again the references seem crude and tasteless only in the Lincoln's Inn poem. In the 'Epithalamion . . . on the Lady Elizabeth', the bride is ablaze with rubies, pearls, and diamonds. Donne's description is hardly startling, and to make it so he must turn the jewels into stars. His description (in stanza vii) of the activities of the wedding-bed in terms of a business transaction is discreetly coy. The analogy is conventional enough; its wit lies in Donne's extensive exploitation of the convention. To be in debt, for love, is no more serious than to 'die' for love. Lovers' 'debts' and their 'deaths' are paid in the same stock exchange, but Donne does not pull the occasion down to the level of the market-place. In the Somerset epithalamion Donne also mentions the bride's jewels, but only to suggest once more that they are stars and that the stars are not so pure as their spheres. So, too, his description of the bride's silk and gold serves to praise and elevate her, for, he says, silk and gold, 'the fruits of wormes and dust', are just objects for the sight of the common onlookers at the wedding ('dust, and wormes').

But in the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion, the description of the bride's flowers and jewels does not lead to such elaborate compliment. They are to make her fit fuel for love, 'As gay as Flora, and as rich as Inde'. If the analogies are conventional, the stanza in which they appear is hardly so. In it, Donne addresses the bridesmaids as 'Our Golden Mines, and furnish'd Treasure'. To be sure he calls them 'Angels', but his reason follows immediately: they bring with them 'Thousands of Angels' on their wedding days. All we are told of the bridesmaids, then, is that they are

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rich. And the bride? In one line she is 'As gay as Flora, and as rich as Inde', and in the next she is 'faire, rich, glad, and in nothing lame'. The bride, then, is fair. At least she is 'in nothing lame'. And she, too, is rich. Donne seems preoccupied with this particular virtue. Is there not something a little ungentlemanly, a little crass and vulgar, in his attitude?

In the next stanza of the poem, some of the groom's attendants are called 'Sonnes of these Senators, wealths deep oceans', and again the overt reference to wealth seems adventitious and crude. In his last stanza, Donne refers to the bride's desire to exchange virginity for womanhood by talking about her preference for 'a mothers rich stile'. The emphasis on money in the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion seems far removed from the conventionally witty business of indebtedness in the Valentine epithalamion.

Donne's description of the bride in the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion also seems different from the descriptions in the others. The Princess Elizabeth is a blazing constellation, a phoenix. She and Frederick are two glorious flames which meet one another. The beauty of Lady Frances is so brilliant that she must powder her hair lest its intense lustre affect the onlookers as Phaëton, not Phoebus, and, for the same reason, she must have a tear of joy in her inflaming eyes. The Lincoln's Inn bride is conceitedly dressed, adorned with flowers and jewels, and Donne writes of her as she approaches the chapel,

Loe, in yon path which store of straw'd flowers graceth,
The sober virgin paceth;
Except my sight faile, 'tis no other thing.

Like the bride in Spenser's *Epithalamion*, this modest bride comes 'with portly pace', but Spenser devotes some fifty lines to a description of his bashful bride's charms. Shall we suppose that Donne's bride has both ravished his sight and impaired his speech? Hardly. He says, nor can his blunt meaning be mistaken, 'Unless I'm blind, that thing is the bride'. This is a strange epithalamion indeed.

It is strange in its refrain. In the 'Epithalamion . . . on the Lady Elizabeth', the refrain is an address to Bishop Valentine, and it integrates the bird imagery and stresses all the romantic and holy aspects of the wedding day. In the Somerset epithalamion, the 'inflaming eyes' and 'loving heart' of the refrain apply equally to the bride and groom. But in the Lincoln's Inn poem, the refrain '*To day put on perfection, and a womans name*' oddly concentrates attention on the occasion as it is important for the bride. The groom seems slighted. The epithalamion is strange, too, in that the wedding guests in their dancing are compared to 'toyl'd beasts'. Worse than this, the groom's attendants are called 'strange Hermaphrodits'.

In the last stanza the bride is strangely likened to a faithful man who is content to spend this life for a better one.

In Theseus's words (and Dr. Johnson's), How shall we find the concord of this discord?

II

We shall not find it, I think, merely in assuming that the poem celebrates a less memorable wedding than that of the Princess Elizabeth or of the Earl of Somerset. The mere doffing of the party manners which Donne might have used on those occasions would not lead to a strange indulgence in tone and in wit on a lesser occasion. The crude, scoffing element in the poem makes it unlikely, too, that it was an offering in jest from one smart young man to another smart young man about to marry, even if we take into account the differences in taste between Donne's day and our own. The wit is too close to insult: it has not the cavalier geniality of Donne's other epithalamia, but rather the heavy-handed raillery of his satires. Donne is here crudely utilitarian in a genre which is customarily complimentary. It seems very doubtful, then, that the occasion of Donne's poem is the actual wedding of a rich maid of London and a gentleman of the Inns of Court. There is good reason to believe that Donne is not celebrating a real wedding at all.

The manuscripts of Donne's poems provide us with indistinct clues about the occasion of the 'Epithalamion made at Lincoln's Inn', and with more definite ones about its approximate date. Sir Herbert Grierson and Miss Helen Gardner agree that the presence of the poem in the Westmoreland manuscript, where it follows the elegies and precedes the verse letters, points to its being the only one of the epithalamia written when the first part of that manuscript was made.¹ Miss Gardner also suggests that since it is there entitled just 'Epithalamion', we have further reason to suppose that the epithalamia of 1613 were not yet written. Moreover, in the first part of the Westmoreland manuscript, all the verse letters but one belong to the time before Donne's marriage and are addressed to the circle of his friends at the Inns of Court. This part of the manuscript appears to have been copied from a collection of Donne's poems made about 1600. On the basis of the Westmoreland manuscript alone, it seems safe to assume that the epithalamion was 'made' at Lincoln's Inn while Donne was a student there.

Mr. I. A. Shapiro has admirably summarized Donne's career at Lincoln's Inn from his admission on 6 May 1592.² He assumes that since Donne was fined for not acting as Steward of Christmas in 1594 (he had been

¹ *The Poems of John Donne* (1912), ii. 91; *The Divine Poems* (Oxford, 1952), p. lxxix.

² 'John Donne and Lincoln's Inn, 1591-1594', *T.L.S.*, 16 Oct. 1930, p. 833, and 23 Oct. 1930, p. 861.

appointed to the office on 26 November) and since he is not mentioned in the *Black Books* of Lincoln's Inn as a student after he had been fined, Donne must have left Lincoln's Inn in December 1594. Mr. John Sparrow makes the same assumption and starts Donne on his travels.¹ But Professor R. C. Bald has discovered that on 20 July 1595 Donne agreed to take 'into his service to instructe and bring upp one Thomas Danbye of the age of fiftene yeres or there aboutes'.² Here is presumptive evidence that Donne was in England in the middle of 1595. There is no real evidence that he left Lincoln's Inn or England until he joined the Cadiz expedition at the end of May 1596. We may, then, suppose that the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion was written at some time between May 1592 and the middle of 1596.

The manuscripts of Donne's poems seem to show that Donne himself did not consider this epithalamion equal in worth or similar in kind to his others. It is not included in those manuscripts which Grierson and Miss Gardner call Group I (*D*, *H* 49, *Lec*, *C* 57, and *SP*). Miss Gardner argues convincingly that the manuscripts in this group derive from one which Donne himself unwillingly made just before taking orders, in compliance with Somerset's request that he should publish his poems. She suggests that Donne omitted from his collection such poems as he thought not worthy of a volume designed to win the favour of the great.³ A large number of these were familiar verse letters addressed to the less distinguished circle of his youth, though Donne seems to have included the verse letters which he was particularly proud of—'The Storm', 'The Calm', and 'To Mr. Rowland Woodward' ('Like one who' in her third widowhood'). We are, I think, forced to conclude that Donne himself considered the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion unworthy of inclusion not only because it was an intimate reminder of his Inns of Court days but also because he felt that it lacked merit. Some of the manuscripts in which the poem does appear, however, may point more precisely to the reason for its exclusion from Group I. In about half of the manuscripts in which the poem appears it is entitled 'Epithalamion on a Citizen'. This title seems to imply that the occasion Donne celebrates is not a very notable one. But it is odd

¹ 'The Date of Donne's Travels' in *A Garland for John Donne*, ed. Theodore Spencer (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), pp. 121–51. Mr. Sparrow thinks there is a 'strong probability' that Donne left London before Christmas (p. 133), but he settles on 1595–6 (p. 134) to reconcile his date with Grierson's suggestion that indications in the *Satires* and *Elegies* make it probable that Donne was in London during 1594 and 1595 (*The Poems of John Donne* (1933), p. xvi).

² Mr. Bald's evidence is based on an action in Chancery which Donne brought in 1598 against one Christopher Danby, a gentleman of Yorkshire (P.R.O., C. 3, 266/93). It was presented in a paper, 'Donne's Travels', read before the English VI group of the Modern Language Association in New York on 29 Dec. 1948. I am indebted to Mr. Bald for sending me his manuscript and permitting me to quote from it.

³ *The Divine Poems*, pp. lxiv–lxv.

that not one of the manuscripts gives the name of the citizen. It is likely that the use of 'Citizen' is generic, and that though some of Donne's contemporaries were unaware of the specific details of the occasion of the poem, their use of 'Citizen' in the title of a poem written by a young gentleman indicates their feeling that Donne's intent was not entirely serious. It is hard to believe that in his Lincoln's Inn days Donne could not have written, had he wanted to, an epithalamion, no matter to whom it was addressed, which would merit inclusion in such a collection as he was making in 1614. The manuscripts lead us to conclude that the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion is a *jeu d'esprit* which Donne later cast aside.

The poem, then, may not celebrate a real wedding. Does it celebrate a mock wedding? I think that Donne wrote it for just such an occasion, and I wish to show, though the available materials are scanty, that such an occasion is in harmony with the long tradition of Inns of Court revelling.

Inns of Court revelling is most frequently associated with the production of lavish masques for specific occasions: with the 'Masque of Proteus' devised by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn for their extraordinary Christmas festivity in 1594; with the masque composed by George Chapman and designed by Inigo Jones which was performed by the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and of Lincoln's Inn to celebrate the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth in 1613; with the spectacular *Triumph of Peace* of 1634, acted by the four Inns for the King and the Court, with a script by James Shirley, architecture by Inigo Jones, and music by Simon Ives and William Lawes. But the Inns did not need an occasion for a masque. William Browne's dedication of his *Inner Temple Masque*, or *Ulysses and Circe* (1615) is interesting because it reveals that the masque is entirely independent of occasion. Browne reminds the gentlemen of the Inner Temple that 'it was done to please ourselves in private', and his reference to 'those other the society hath produced' probably indicates that such performances were not uncommon.¹ Masques were, on the whole, exceptional excrescences which evolved from the normal procedure of revelling in which highly ritualistic 'solemn revels', marked by obeisance and stately parade, were followed by 'post revels' or informal dancing by the younger gentlemen. Into this standardized form of entertainment the high-spirited young men at the Inns gradually introduced pageantry or a play, buffoonery, and burlesque.²

¹ Cited by A. Wigfall Green in *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama* (New Haven, 1931), p. 113. Browne's words 'please ourselves in private' do not imply that his masque was performed exclusively for the members of the Inner Temple. Many guests had been invited to the performance. See J. Bruce Williamson, *The History of the Temple*, London (London, 2nd edn., 1925), p. 314.

² Green, p. 12. Williamson says (p. 174) that the Inner Temple records for 1561-2 refer to sums laid out for 'masks, playes, disquysinges or other like' (*sic*).

The amount of such revelling must have been remarkable. An entry in 1431 in the *Black Books* of Lincoln's Inn shows the frequency of revelling in an order which restricts such occasions:

... it is accorded by all the felawship that ther schall be iiij revels in the yeere and no mo, that is to sayyng, in the fest off All Halowen oon, to the wych schall be contributorie as well the persons wych were woned to paye to Seint William ys revell as tho the wych were woned paie to Seynt Hugh is Revell; and in the fest off Seint Arkenewold - 10ther, to wych schall be contributorie Seint Edmond is men. Item, the iiij^{de} i the fest off Purificacion off owre Lady, to wych all the remenaunt schall be contributorie savyng Seint Peter and Seint Thomas men. The Ferthe on Midsomer Day, to wych sall be contributorie Seynt Peter and Seint Thomas men.¹

It is doubtful whether this order was followed to the letter, for in 1448 there is a reference to 'the revels at Christmas last'.² Attendance at the revels seems to have been compulsory, for there is a record of four men being put out of commons 'for goyng out of the Hall on Hallowmas evyn at the tyme of the Revelles'.³ There is some evidence that the ritual of the revels palled on the gentlemen of Lincoln's Inn: on one occasion, one of them was put out of commons because he sang mockingly and irreverently at the revels;⁴ on another occasion, all the fellows of the Inn refused to dance before the distinguished guests invited by the Benchers.⁵ There is evidence, too, that it was hard to enforce discipline.⁶ An entry on 14 November 1608 is illuminating: a committee of three Benchers and three others is appointed 'to conferr wth the younge gentlemen towching the time, manner and charge of the Revells and sportes intended'.⁷ It is apparent that the young gentlemen took an active part in the planning of the revelling, and also that the revels were invariably combined with sports. Nor is it strange that the young gentlemen often confused the two. At Midsummer, for instance, ritualistic candles and reeds were ordered for the Inn,⁸ and a light erected in the Hall to honour St. John; it is no

¹ W. P. Baildon, ed., *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn. The Black Books* (London, 1897-1902), i. 4. Hereafter these volumes are referred to as *Black Books*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18. It is difficult to generalize about the frequency and the occasions of revelling because of the nature of the records in the *Black Books*. These are mainly concerned with promulgations, appointments, fines, and accounts; customary procedures can only be inferred. An entry of 5 Nov. 1566 refers to All Saints and Candlemas as 'the two principall festes' (p. 353). In 1614, All Saints, Candlemas, and Ascension weeks are called 'graund weekes' and Trinity Sunday is called a 'graund day', but only when Midsummer Day is not in term. If Midsummer Day fell in Trinity Term, it, rather than Trinity Sunday, was celebrated as a grand day (ii. 166). In 1622 reference is made to 'the 4 festivall Graund Dayes' (ii. 235).

³ *Ibid.*, i. 291 (anno 1549).

⁵ ii. xxviii, 131 (anno 1610).

⁷ ii. 115.

⁴ i. 306 (anno 1553).

⁶ ii. 16; also i. 295; ii. 22, 43, 91, 102, &c.

⁸ i. 313, 316, 321, 324.

surprise to find in an entry that 'Eldrington, Harrington, and Berners, aboughte Trynyte Sondaye laste, in the nyghte tyme, did take downe the lyghte of Sainte John in the Hall, and did hang in the stede therof a horse-hede, in dyspite of the Sainte'.¹

Although Saturday nights at the Inn seem to have been given over to card-playing and dicing, there is at least one indication that informal entertainment of other sorts also took place then. At a Council held on 2 November 1559, it was ordered that 'the Butler shall note every Saterdaye at night whoe faylyth at Revells that were at supper that night in the Howse, and that he that faylyth shall forfeit iiijd. for every tyme, to be collectid by the Buttler, and therefore the Post Revelles to be agayne used as they have byn before this time'.² This entry shows the frequency of the informal entertainment put on at the Inn. The spectacular masques that are remembered are a small and unusual part of the playing and the dancing, the music and the buffoonery, the improvization and the burlesquing in which the young gentlemen of the Inn engaged.

III

If we view Donne's epithalamion in the context of Inns of Court reveling, the strangeness of its tone and the oddness of its details disappear. We should expect Donne to use broadly discordant effects, not subtly witty ones. The tasteless references to death expressed in the images of the embowelling priest and of the female organs of the church would convulse the young gentlemen of the Inn. They would thoroughly enjoy Donne's jibes at their mundane preoccupation with angels. In a mock-marriage, the part of the bride would be played by one of the 'painted courtiers', and the words on the bride's approach—'tis no other thing'—would be not only fitting but funny. Moreover, under such circumstances, the refrain becomes a jocular device: it serves as a continual reminder that the man playing the part of the bride is literally putting on the name of woman for 'today' and 'tonight'. No wonder, then, that Donne focused attention in it on the bride alone.

In a conventional epithalamion, the reference to the hermaphroditism of the groom's attendants is out of place. But in a mock-epithalamion the reference becomes innocently salacious: the Inns of Court men are 'Of study and play made strange Hermaphrodits' because at such performances they must take the female parts. Donne's conceit at the end of the poem, which compares the bride to 'a faithfull man content, / That this life for a better should be spent', becomes still another device to emphasize the confusion of sex caused by a man's playing the part of the bride. The final

¹ i. 273 (*anno* 1546).

² i. 329.

refer
epith
gende
call a
indee
night
In
Donn
is all
capac
seriou
of sac
inevit
Linco
feel in
a sup
obliqu
and r
only
the ri
woul
claim
naked
Do
keen
begui
tainm
other

I sh
epith
in 15
to be
the p
pecul
Inn in
It i
genre
negle
satiriz

reference to the bride as 'This Sun' becomes more than a conventional epithet for the bride's transcendent beauty; it, too, takes advantage of the gender of the bride, and Donne uses²⁰ the stale sun-son pun freshly to call attention once more to his unusual bride. 'Wonders are wrought', indeed, 'for shee which had no maime', except that 'shee' is a 'he', '*To night puts on perfection, and a womans name*'.

In the context of an epithalamion 'made' or performed at Lincoln's Inn, Donne is free to endow his 'Temple' with biological functions, for he is alluding to a temple of the law. Such gross stress on the procreative capacities of a church admits of no allegorical interpretation; to take a serious view of the poem is to say that Donne's canticle here sings a song of sacrilege. But to a group of students at Lincoln's Inn, 'Temple' would inevitably call to mind the two rival institutions, and the gentlemen at Lincoln's would be delighted by Donne's irreverence. They would not feel insulted when Donne compared them to 'toyl'd beasts'; since they had a superfluity of dancing in their solemn revels, they would enjoy Donne's oblique reference to their 'pleasing labours'. His lines about the chains and robes 'put on / T' adorne the day, not thee' would remind them not only of the vestments which adorned the man-bride but probably also of the ritualistic trappings in which the Inn officials were bedecked. They would appreciate Donne's little professional joke in his mention of 'elder claimers', and they would delight in his comparing the naked bride to the naked truth.

Donne's poem is not a serious epithalamion, but neither is it a 'satire keen and critical'. It is closer to the 'palpable-gross play [that] hath well beguil'd / The heavy gait of night'. To see it as a broadly satiric entertainment is to rid it of its difficulties and to place it rightly, not with Donne's other epithalamia, but with his satires and love elegies.

IV

I should like to propose, though more tentatively, that Donne wrote his epithalamion for a performance at the Midsummer revels of Lincoln's Inn in 1595. The date is based on three assumptions which I shall try to show to be fairly sound: (1) Donne's poem could have been written only after the publication of Spenser's *Epithalamion*; (2) The Midsummer season is peculiarly fitting for such a performance; (3) Donne was still at Lincoln's Inn in June 1595.

It is difficult to see why Donne should have turned to the epithalamic genre for a revels entertainment. In England the epithalamion was neglected until the 1590's, and it seems strange that Donne should have satirized broadly in a genre with which his audience would not be very

well acquainted. Puttenham's discussion of the epithalamion in *The Arte of English Poesie* conveniently shows us what the genre meant to the cultivated Elizabethan gentleman.¹ For him, epithalamia were essentially 'ballades at the bedding of the bride', and his description was based on his familiarity with the lyric epithalamia of Catullus and one made 'of late yeares' by Johannes Secundus.² Puttenham did not consider the great number of Latin epithalamia of the Renaissance, which were predominantly not lyric, but, following the pattern of Claudian and Statius, essentially narrative and descriptive.³ The only epithalamion in English printed before Spenser's was Sidney's song of the shepherd Dicus at the marriage of Thyrsis and Kala, written in the early 1580's and first published in the 1593 *Arcadia*. It was neither a bedding ballad nor an 'epical' poem modelled after the epithalamia of Claudian and Statius, but a pastoral benediction. Against the background of the epical character of the major epithalamic tradition of the Renaissance and the paucity of models in English, the startling originality of Spenser's poem stands out—despite scholars' pointing to sources and analogues for hundreds of particular details.⁴ Spenser fused the narration of the events of the bridal day and the description of its many participants and places, typical of the epic or heroic epithalamion, with the bedding ballad and the personal appeal for benediction in a poem glowing with lyricism.

Donne's Lincoln's Inn epithalamion has the same blending of the epic narration of the bridal day with an essentially lyric intent, and this fusion of the traditions was available to him only after the publication of Spenser's poem.⁵ If Donne had written his poem before he saw Spenser's, he would probably have satirized in the neo-Latin epical fashion familiar to some in his audience or in the pastoral-benediction fashion of Sidney. Something caused him to satirize in the peculiar form he chose, and that was probably the form recently used by the most highly regarded poet of his day. Spenser's *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* were entered in the Stationers' Register on 19 November 1594, and the first edition is dated 1595. The volume probably appeared early in that year, though perhaps

¹ 'The Maner of Rejoysings at Mariages and Weddings', bk. i, chap. xxvi.

² The Latin epithalamion of Secundus is a real bedding ballad which starts at the wedding couch, describes in detail similar to that of Carew's 'The Rapture' the amorous combat, and ends with a stanza of hope that the marriage may be fruitful.

³ See Robert H. Case, *English Epithalamies* (London, 1896), p. xxi, and Cortlandt Van Winkle, *Spenser's Epithalamion* (New York, 1926), pp. 6-7, 19.

⁴ See Van Winkle's edition of the *Epithalamion* and also James A. S. McPeck, 'The Major Sources of Spenser's *Epithalamion*', *J.E.G.P.*, xxxv (1936), 183-213.

⁵ Grierson says that Donne comes nearer to Spenser in the epithalamia than in any other kind of poem (*The Poems*, ii, 91), and Professor Osgood thinks that Donne here imitates Spenser's metre and design (*The Works of Edmund Spenser, Variorum Edition; The Minor Poems*, ii (Baltimore, 1947), 659).

after 25 March. If we assume, as I think we must, that Donne modelled his epithalamion on Spenser's, then Donne's poem was not written earlier than the first part of 1595.

I have implied that Donne turned to the epithalamic genre and to Spenser's design because he could assume that Spenser's poem would be fresh in the minds of his audience. A recent work by a popular writer is always fair game for parody, but more than recency may have drawn Donne to Spenser's *Epithalamion*. In Donne's poem, the line 'Hee [the sun] flies in winter, but he now stands still' seems to indicate a summer date, though conventionally in an epithalamion the sun never sets quickly enough. The most important revels at this time of year were held at Midsummer, and Midsummer seems the most likely occasion for the performance of Donne's epithalamion. If Donne were casting about for a subject for a Midsummer entertainment, he would find special relevance in Spenser's poem. Spenser makes it clear that his marriage took place on the feast of St. Barnabas, and the proverb 'Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright, / The longest day and the shortest night' shows that (with the calendar ten days out) the feast of St. Barnabas and Midsummer were frequently associated. I do not wish to suggest that Donne wrote a mock-Anniversary for Spenser, but I think it likely that the date of Spenser's wedding, a lovely detail which Spenser treats most charmingly, must have impressed Donne and tempted him to toy with the idea of Midsummer marriage. In June the newness of Spenser's poem would make Donne's burlesque topical and obvious. Moreover, the customary festivities of the Midsummer season make the Midsummer revels the perfect occasion for a mock-epithalamion.

When Spenser referred to the heavens 'In which a thousand torches flaming bright / Doe burne . . .', he may have been using a common conceit for stars, but his plea for darkness and for quiet has particular significance in the light of Midsummer tradition. The ancient sun-rites were celebrated by the lighting of bonfires, and the lights and reeds mentioned in the *Black Books* reflect a citified version of this.¹ Dekker mentions bonfires and triumphing on Midsummer Night in his *Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* (1606).² Although the latest surviving record of a pageant at Midsummer in London is for 1545,³ provincial towns continued to have Midsummer Shows well into the seventeenth century.⁴ The marching watch of two thousand in London at Midsummer was discontinued by the middle of the sixteenth century,

¹ See Sir Henry Ellis's revision and enlargement of John Brand's *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain* (London, 1877), i. 298-308.

² Cited in Brand, i. 318. The reference is to Dekker's third day's triumph, 'Candle-light, or The Nocturnal Tryumph'.

³ See *Malone Society Collections III* (Oxford, 1954), pp. xxiii, 36.

⁴ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry*, i (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), 44-47.

but ensign-bearers still roamed the city at the end of the century.¹ In his *Popular Antiquities*, Brand says that the ritualistic dance around the coal fire in the Inns of Court may be connected with Midsummer festivity,² and we have already had an example of the horseplay which some gentlemen of Lincoln's Inn indulged in at this time of year. Brand further shows that at this season other customs were followed: fernseed was esteemed, love divinations of all kinds were popular, and boys dressed in girls' clothes.³ The Midsummer tradition helped to create the special aura of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Shakespeare's very title was an invitation to a giddy, vertiginous, and sublunary world.⁴ The same tradition would make Donne's audience peculiarly susceptible to midsummer madness.

I think we may assume that Midsummer revels took place at Lincoln's Inn in 1595 despite the lack of documentary corroboration. They seem to have been customary, and there is no evidence in the *Black Books* that they were not held. In 1595 Trinity Sunday fell on 15 June (O.S.). Trinity Term usually began on the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday;⁵ in 1595, then, term began on 18 June. Since Midsummer was customarily celebrated in conjunction with St. John's Day, 24 June,⁶ it fell in 1595 during Trinity Term, and it, rather than Trinity Sunday, would be celebrated as a 'grand' day.

Was Donne at Lincoln's Inn as late as June 1595? Mr. Shapiro has examined in the manuscript *Black Books* of Lincoln's Inn (vol. v) lists of those who should have kept vacations and either did or did not, from the Easter vacation of 1589 to the Easter vacation of 1596. In these lists Mr. Shapiro has found that Donne's absence at the Easter vacation in 1593 is duly noted; he has found no record that Donne either kept or failed to keep a vacation after the notice of his keeping the autumn vacation of 1594. But Donne's being appointed Steward of Christmas on 26 November 1594 shows that he was at Lincoln's Inn at that time. That he was fined for not performing his duties as Steward, and that his name does not appear in the vacation lists after October 1594, do not prove that he left Lincoln's Inn between 26 November and 25 December 1594. He may have skipped attendance at a vacation or two while still maintaining his Lincoln's Inn connexion (we know, for example, that his absence at the Easter vacation in 1593 was no indication of complete severance). Nor does his defection as Steward indicate that he had left the Inn. Stewardships in the Inns must have been expensive and dull, and fines from men refusing to serve as stewards of various occasions seem to have constituted a staple sum of Inn

¹ Brand, i. 326-8.

² i. 310.

³ i. 311, 314-15, 330 ff.

⁴ See the statement by Horace Howard Furness, ed., *A Midsummer Nights Dreame*, vol. x of *Variorum Shakespeare* (Philadelphia, 1895), p. v.

⁵ Williamson, p. 119, n. 3.

⁶ For the conjunction of Midsummer with St. John's Day, see Brand, i. 298-305.

income. There is no more frequent entry in the *Black Books* than that of Mr. So-and-so fined so much for refusing to serve as steward of this or that¹ (the fines were standardized, and that for the Steward of Christmas was smaller than most, 26s. 8d.).² Donne's defection as Steward need not mean, then, that he was absent from London and from Lincoln's Inn during and after Christmas 1594.³ Indeed, Mr. Shapiro prints the part of the treasurer's record for (Nov.) 1594 to (Nov.) 1595 which shows that the Inn received from Donne the sum of 26s. 8d. for not acting as Steward of Christmas. Since it is not likely that Donne paid his fine in advance, we have here evidence that he was at the Inn after Christmas 1594. It is even conceivable that the very payment of the fine indicates that Donne planned to remain at the Inn for a time. Had he severed his connexion with the Inn before Christmas (or even after), he might not have been fined or felt obliged to pay his fine. The vacation lists inform us, I think, that Donne determined not to study law seriously about or after Christmas 1594, but they do not tell us that he left Lincoln's Inn at that time; in fact, from Mr. Bald's evidence that Donne was in London even in July 1595, we may probably assume that he spent Midsummer at Lincoln's Inn.

It is likely, then, that in the 'Epithalamion made at Lincoln's Inn' we catch Jack Donne in a carefree midsummer mood after he had decided that the law was not for him. We see in the poem not the serious poet of compliment but the roistering Inns of Court man of three and twenty, 'not dissolute, but very neat; a great visiter of Ladies, a great frequenter of Playes, a great writer of conceited Verses'.⁴

¹ For example, at Lincoln's Inn, the appointed Stewards of Christmas were fined in 1586 and in 1587 (*Black Books*, ii. 5, 9). At the Inner Temple it was customary to re-appoint annually for several years the same persons to Christmas offices, and the same persons were repeatedly fined for not appearing (Williamson, pp. 442-3, 209).

² *Black Books*, ii. 1, 5.

³ During Donne's residence at Lincoln's Inn, the custom of keeping Christmas in all its ancient grand ceremonial seems to have been largely discontinued. In 1597 some sort of 'shew' was presented (*ibid.*, p. 55), but with reference to the omission of a solemn Christmas in 1595 Baildon notes: 'This custom of keeping solemn or grand Christmas seems to have been given up' (*ibid.*, p. 44).

It is possible that Donne spent Christmas 1594 frolicking at Gray's Inn, for this was the year that the gentlemen of Gray's kept up their merriment from 20 December until Shrove Tuesday (Green, pp. 73, 99). To be sure, the gentlemen of Gray's had invited only the gentlemen of the Inner Temple to join their festivities, but gentlemen at the other Inns may have been attracted by the noise and have tried to participate.

⁴ Sir Richard Baker's description of Donne at Lincoln's Inn, in *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London, 1643), p. 156.

BLAKE, HAYLEY, AND LADY HESKETH

By G. E. BENTLEY, JR.

A NUMBER of fragments have been published of the correspondence between William Hayley and Lady Hesketh relating to William Blake.¹ These fragments are chiefly valuable for the insight they give into the interaction between Blake and these two not extraordinary representatives of the late eighteenth century. The omissions conceal nothing of great significance about Blake and his life; they do, however, contain a much more amiable and understandable picture of Lady Hesketh than the published fragments reveal. Scholars have united in their criticism of Lady Hesketh and her relations with Blake in a way that her character, as shown in her letters, does not justify. It is frequently alleged that she always disapproved of Blake's art and engraving, suspected his politics, and shuddered at his nonconformity. This is an oversimplification which unnecessarily maligns a conventional and proper but well-meaning and kindly old lady. As a patron of and sympathizer with the art and mind of William Blake she had major limitations, but there can be no doubt that she worked enthusiastically and well on his behalf. The full publication of this correspondence as it relates to Blake will, I believe, vindicate Lady Hesketh's character to a certain extent, as well as illuminate certain incidental features of Blake's life; it will also make a coherent whole of the scattered and incomplete portions of the letters that have already appeared in print.

William Hayley, under whose patronage Blake worked from September 1800 until September 1803 in the little seaside village of Felpham in Sussex, was a country gentleman of moderate means who cultivated popular simpering verse so successfully that he was offered, and declined, the laureateship in 1790. His literary efforts extended to drama, biographies of Milton and Cowper, an essay on sculpture, and endless epitaphs. In politics he was a tolerant Whig, able to entertain mildly republican views, or sympathize with Lady Hesketh. His chief characteristic was an intense desire, coupled with considerable energy, to assist his friends and the deserving poor. He was a generous and effective patron and friend to Cowper, Romney, Flaxman, and Blake, as well as many others; and it is perhaps unjust that his name should chiefly live today in the acid epigrams which

¹ Cf. H. N. Fairchild, 'Unpublished References to Blake by Hayley and Lady Hesketh', *S.P.*, xxv (1928), 1-10; T. Wright, *The Life of William Blake* (Olney, 1929), passim; and M. Bishop, *Blake's Hayley* (London, 1951), cf. pp. 262, 277, 278, 291-2, 297-8. About 40 per cent. of the Hayley-Hesketh correspondence quoted in this article has appeared in print before.

Blake jotted down in his notebook probably years after he ceased to have any regular contact with his well-meaning patron.

Harriet Lady Hesketh was a woman with strict views of propriety, and a fierce family pride. At the time when Hayley was first coming into contact with Blake she was sixty-seven, twelve years older than Hayley; a widow with set ways and a great desire to enhance the worldly fame of her cousin William Cowper. Cowper had died in the spring of 1800, a week after the death of Hayley's illegitimate son Thomas Alphonso, and only a few months before Blake made his first visit to Felpham to arrange about his removal there.

Hayley and Lady Hesketh were drawn together by their intense common affection for Cowper. This bond was alternately strengthened and strained by their efforts to publish a biography of their lamented friend. Hayley was the obvious author, with his experience, reputation, and industry; but Lady Hesketh, partly as Cowper's executor and partly by force of character, had all the documents. After some coy sparring in July of 1800 over who should write the biography, Hayley accepted the job on 5 August. However, his problems were not entirely literary. Though he believed that 'biographical Duty . . . requires in general, I think; that I should say what I know to be true, when the Truth is honorable to Friend[ship]'¹, he wanted to write a full and authoritative biography. Though he agreed with Lady Hesketh that he should conceal the facts that Cowper had sunk to reviewing books, and that he had loved Lady Hesketh's sister, he did not feel that he could well pass over completely the years of Cowper's madness.

On this matter Lady Hesketh had violent feelings. She had entrusted Hayley with his biographical duties because 'there are some [events of Cowper's life] which one would wish to Shield from the Publick eye—in your hands Sir I know he will be safe'.² In this matter she held a commanding position, for almost all the necessary materials were in her hands, and the most poor Hayley could do when she became stubborn was to suggest that Samuel Rose or John Johnson³ might be more tactful as biographers than he. Lady Hesketh showed her power early. On 14 August she wrote

¹ Letter to Lady Hesketh, 7 October 1801. All this correspondence is quoted from the original manuscripts; seventeen letters from Hayley dated from 18 July 1805 to 4 November 1806, fifty-three from Lady Hesketh between 5 January 1804 and 27 October 1806, and one dated 4 February 1801, were consulted at the Cowper Museum, Olney, Buckinghamshire; the rest, all those dated before 1801 except Lady Hesketh's of 4 February 1801, were transcribed from the British Museum Add. 30803 A and B. I particularly want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Thomas T. Radmore, curators, and Mr. P. A. Wright, trustee, of the Cowper Museum, for their kindness to me in my visits to Olney.

² Lady Hesketh's letter of 5 July 1800.

³ Johnson's letters to Hayley for this same period, in so far as they relate to Blake, have been transcribed in my article in *S.P.*, liii (1956), 60-74.

that she couldn't bear to give up the Cowper letters in her possession; and though little by little she yielded, she could still write on 6 December 1800 that 'you have been saved many painful moments by not seeing all the papers'; furthermore, she trusted Hayley

not to suffer any productions of my dear cousins to see the light that bear any marks of that Cruel Malady [with] which it pleased Heaven so frequently to afflict him! . . . it never would have occur'd to me that any human Being cou'd think otherwise.

Further, she demonstrated her reaction to any public notice of Cowper's madness. Cowper's friend Samuel Greatheed had published a sermon in which he discussed the poet's insanity, and Lady Hesketh was overwhelmed with self-pitying indignation. Hayley tried to calm her, and on 3 October 1800 she replied:

I have never enjoy'd a moment's health of body, or peace of mind, since that fatal Thurs^d the 18th of Sep^r when the cruel packet first met my eyes. . . . [Greatheed's] horrid Publication . . . Insulted the Ashes of that friend of whom he is unworthy to speak, and planted Daggers in the hearts of ev'ry Individual of his afflicted family . . . No Honest man, who was Himself in his Senses cou'd have acted as M^r G: has done! . . . I am suffering almost all that a human Being can suffer in consequence of this Barbarous Transaction w^{ch} . . . will certainly get the better of the small remains of health which were left to me—what more I may yet have to Suffer from pretended friends or avowed Enemys is impossible to say.

And on 29 December she declared: 'I have not recoverd, nor do I ever expect to recover, the violent Shock my Spirits received on a certain occasion!' It is revealing to note that part of Greatheed's sin lay in his responsibility for the fact that 'a great part of the world . . . have conceived him to have been a Disorderd Enthusiast'.¹ This idea, at least, Hayley was constrained to deplore.²

Lady Hesketh had another prejudice with which Hayley was perhaps more in sympathy. On 29 December 1800 she wrote:

every Remark in favor of Royalty, or Government, I intreat you dear Sir not to suppress—but shou'd you happen to find, (which I hardly think you will) [some] w^{ch} any think of a contrary nature I depend that your affection for your friend & your obliging attention to me, will induce you to bury them in oblivion.

Almost two years later she thought it necessary to return to this same point. On 9 November 1802 she wrote:

I suffer so much pain when I hear our dear friend accused of Democratic

¹ Letter of 11 February 1801.

² Letter of 22 April 1801: 'He was no Methodist, & . . . in truth his understanding was too strong & his penetration too quick, to be perverted to Fanaticism in any Form.'

principles . . . I wou'd not for the World that a hasty expression drop'd from Such a Pen . . . should give one moments pain to the ears or wound the Hearts of our excellent King & Queen!

Lady Hesketh parted with her Cowper materials sparingly, and evidently had some left when the biography was finally published early in 1803. However, an amicable settlement was arranged; on 19 March 1801 Lady Hesketh wrote: 'I really, and from my Heart am desirous that you should be guided by your own Judgment only as to what shou'd, or shou'd not, be publishd.' It is likely that she had in mind when writing this the letter in which Hayley wrote: 'I will print nothing without first applying for yr Sanction.'¹ These negotiations and arrangements form the bulk of the subject-matter of the letters in which Blake is mentioned.²

On 22 July 1800 Hayley urged Lady Hesketh herself to write the biography of Cowper, and promised his assistance.

I shall have a pleasure in furnishing yr Book with an Engraving of his expressive Countenance from the exquisite portrait by Romney, which now adorns the Library of my marine Turret, & which I could not bear to send away from my daily Contemplation of it—but a very happy Incident will render that unnecessary for a most worthy, enthusiastic, affectionate Engraver, who has within these few days finished for me a small drawing (from a most wonderful portrait, as large as Life, which my dear crippled child contrived to execute of Himself in Crayons) has attached himself so much to me, that He has taken a Cottage in this little marine village to pursue his art in various Branches under my auspices, & as He has infinite Genius with a most engaging simplicity of character, I hope He will execute many admirable things in this sequestered scene, with the aid of an excellent Wife, to whom He has been married 17 years, & who shares his Labours and his Talents—

He has already made me most agreeable amends for the mortification I suffered in seeing that very unfaithful representation of my dear child, which appears in the volume I had the Honour to send you—a portrait drawn from the medallion by an excellent artist, but in a most unfavorable season, when He was suffering from inflamed Eyes & too great a Pressure of business!—³

This information is somewhat premature, for Blake did not move to Felp-ham until the third week in September. He had evidently, however, just been to Felpham to make arrangements. Shortly before his arrival Hayley mentioned a project which probably would have called on Blake's services,

¹ Letter of 21 September 1800.

² Cf. W. Hayley, *The Life, and Posthumous Writings, of William Cowper, Esqr* (London, 1803), i, pp. iv-vii.

³ Hayley's *Essay on Sculpture*, with engravings by Blake. The portrait was drawn by Hayley's friend Henry Howard.

but which was never carried out. On 13 September he wrote to Lady Hesketh:

I am at present finishing a work devoted to the memory of my dear child, which I mean to print in November, with two engraved portraits of Him more faithful to his expressive Countenance, than the miserably unjust Medallion in the Essay on Sculpture.

Blake may be further referred to in Hayley's letters of 24 December 1800 and 15 January 1801, in which Hayley mentions some work done by 'my secretary' and 'by a sick Secretary'.

In his letter of 25 February 1801 Hayley was full of the needs of his biography:

Pray, my dear Lady, have you the little Picture of his Mother?—I think the Life should contain an engraving of that Portrait, as well as of her Son, & I have an excellent enthusiastic Creature, a Friend of Flaxmans, under my own Eye residing in this village; He is by profession an Engraver, but He says I have taught Him to paint in miniature,¹ & in Truth He has improved his excellent versatile Talents very much in this retired scene, where He has constant access to several very fine works of art by my Friend Romney, & by that very wonderful young artist, my dear departed child!—I intend that this very amiable Man shall execute, under my own Inspection, all the plates for the Work projected; & I am persuaded He will produce a Head of Cowper, that will surprise & delight you; & assuredly it will be executed con amore, as He idolizes the Poet, & will have as fine a Portrait to work from, as ever pencil produced.—

On 5 March Lady Hesketh replied that Cowper's cousin Mrs. Bodham probably had the picture of Cowper's mother. At the same time she expressed her anxiety lest any hint of madness appear in the Cowper engravings which were to decorate the biography, and she asked particularly that someone who had known Cowper be allowed to see the engravings before the book was published. Her fears were confirmed when Hayley sent her a miniature, evidently executed by Blake, from Hayley's portrait of Cowper by Romney. Lady Hesketh was horrified by the indications of insanity in the miniature, and on 19 March she wrote: on one subject

I am determin'd—absolutely determind!—I mean the subject of the picture, which I have this moment receiv'd and for which I do indeed thank you; tho.' the Sight of it has in real truth inspired me with a degree of horror, which I shall not recover from in haste! . . . I cannot restrain my Pen from declaring that I think it dreadful! Shocking! and that I intreat you on my Knees not to suffer so horrible a representation of our angelic friend to be presented to the publick and to disgrace and disfigure a work I long so much to see I give you my word that I open'd the elegant Case you sent me without y^e smallest spark

¹ The words 'in miniature' are inserted over a caret, presumably as an afterthought.

of Prejudice, not having heard a Sylable about this picture from anybody but yourself, and tho.' I thought perhaps that it wou'd be difficult for any resemblance of our friend to please me so well as that of my Lawrence, yet I still hoped, and expected to be pleased with any picture which He had sat for;—but Alas! how am I disappointed? . . . I cannot bear to have it in my possession nor wou'd I for worlds, shew it to any one . . . I must observe that I have no doubt that the Original from which this fatal Miniature is taken is a very fine Picture, considered as a Picture, & I even believe the miniature is very well executed . . . [But I must intreat] that you will not be so cruel as to multiply this fatal resemblance, by having the picture engrav'd.¹

From this, her first reaction to Blake, it has been customary to deduce the beginning of Lady Hesketh's antipathy towards Blake; but she made it clear, as this long extract proves, that her objection was neither to the miniature nor to the painting as works of art, but to the likeness as a representation of Cowper. To this objection we can be more sympathetic.

Hayley replied patiently, and somewhat caustically, on 20 March:

I am more concerned than surprised at the Impression which the picture made on yr Fancy—you may be confident that I shall endeavour not to wound yr affectionate Feelings on this Subject—The experiment I have already made has convinced me that no Engraving from the work of Romney would satisfy yr Imagination.

But he went ahead with his plan to have the painting engraved by Blake.

Blake does not appear in the correspondence during the next seven months; but on 1 November 1801 Hayley wrote:

I have desired our dear Rose to persuade you to indulge the warm-hearted artist, who is preparing the decorations for Cowper's Life, with the privilege of having the original drawing of Lawrence for a few weeks at Felpham, as He is confident, that He shall by that means produce a more satisfactory Engraving—He is already far advanced in two other portraits for the Book in question, & I think they will be excellent—I am sure they must be so, if they prove equal to the Industry & the affectionate Zeal of the artist—

On 7 November Lady Hesketh agreed that it would be desirable to have an engraving made from her portrait by Lawrence, and promised to send it. And before she could change her mind, Hayley wrote, on 14 November:

I hasten to thank you, my dear Lady Hesketh, for the gracious alacrity, with which you promise to indulge the laudable wishes of the worthy artist (who devotes his Hand & all his Faculties most fervently to our dear Cowper) with the original sketch of Lawrence.—

¹ This unsigned miniature is now in the possession of the Rev. W. H. Cowper Johnson, 19 The Close, Norwich.

He was none too prompt. On 18 November Lady Hesketh wrote that she had changed her mind about the desirability of sending her portrait to Felpham because of the damage it might receive. Hayley hastened to reassure her on 22 November:

Fear not for your inestimable drawing!—it shall not be taken out of the Frame, if it arrives¹ to gratify my worthy artist who works constantly in my study, as our respective Labours never clash, & I have great pleasure in promoting his success—for He is in Truth an excellent Creature with admirable Talents—

Lady Hesketh relented, and on 7 December Hayley wrote to acknowledge the arrival of the picture. 'Well! Heaven grant to the kind enthusiastic engraver at my side ability to be more delicately faithful to the proper Expression of this invaluable portrait' than Bartolozzi had been.

One mysterious unsigned letter, dated simply 25 January, seems to refer to Blake. It is possible that the letter is to Lady Hesketh from her sister Theodora, Cowper's early love, and that it had been enclosed in a letter of Lady Hesketh's to Hayley. Theodora had as firm ideas about the biography as her sister, and certainly she had valuable information about Cowper; but Lady Hesketh would never permit Hayley to write to her directly; 'it wou'd kill her to correspond with you'.² However, she did let Hayley enclose notes to her in his letters to Lady Hesketh. Theodora had evidently been told by Lady Hesketh about the portraits Hayley intended for the biography, and she evidently shared her sister's opinion of Romney:

His having mention'd the Artist whom he has employ'd in the Engravings so intended for the present work, induces me to say that I have it very much at heart to obtain some alteration at least, in the Print we^h . . . in my opinion will have a very contrary effect. Surely it is an Unjust and most unfavorable representation of the Dear Departed!

About the end of February 1802 Hayley sent Lady Hesketh a letter which was late in arriving, and of which only the rough draft exists in the British Museum collection. In it Hayley explains that Flaxman has made a design for their proposed monument to Cowper, which he encloses. However, Hayley writes,

[I myself] have made a device of which I send you a neat Copy from the kind Hand of the friendly Zealous Engraver who daily works by my side & who flatters me so far as to say that He never saw any monumental design more ~~delicately~~ modestly appropriate to the honoured dead.

¹ Hayley seems to have had little doubt, for that same day he wrote to John Johnson: 'Did I tell you that our excellent Blake has wished to have Lawrence's original drawing to copy in his second engraving, and that our good Lady Hesketh is so gracious as to send it?' A. Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake* (London, 1942), p. 147.

² Letter of 27 November 1801.

And then he makes a suggestion that one would ordinarily have thought could only have come from Blake; this idea 'perhaps the filial spirit of my angelic sculptor' suggested to me'. Lady Hesketh evidently² indicated that she had not received this letter, for on 7 March Hayley expressed his disappointment that it had gone astray;

you will judge of my disappointment, when I add, that the device was literally a design of my own, copied for you by the neat pencil of that friendly & zealous artist, who labours every day in my presence, with admirable Industry.—

On 9 March Lady Hesketh replied that both letters had by now arrived; and on 13 March Hayley wrote: 'I enclose for yr choice a new device of my own, which my industrious Friend Blake the Engraver, & I prefer to my first design'.³ He also sent her a poem which is interesting because Blake is, to a certain extent, its subject, and because it was undoubtedly shown to the man whom it was intended to inspire. It is a pity that Blake's reaction to it is not preserved.

Good Angels guide the Graver's Hand
With perfect skill to trace
Those Looks, that could the Heart command,
The Light of Cowper's Face!
Shew Character, surpassed by none!
Wit, modest as a child!
and spirit, like a vernal Sun,
Tho penetrating, mild!
So shall his Portrait with regard,
And with his Verse contend;
Displaying all, that made the Bard
Affection's favorite Friend!⁴

It is at least certain that Blake and Lady Hesketh would have uttered a fervent 'Amen' to the sentiment.

On 23 March Hayley expressed his pleasure that Lady Hesketh approved of the epitaphs for Cowper which he had sent her.

I have this instant been trying to make the first Epitaph (which I meant for Dereham)⁵ in perfect Harmony (according to my own Ideas) with the sculptural design—The friendly artist by my side tells me I have succeeded, but I want your opinion, before I give him full credit.—

¹ Thomas Alphonso had been apprenticed to Flaxman as a sculptor.

² No letters from her dated between 23 December 1801 and 9 March 1802 are preserved in these collections.

³ It is noteworthy that this is the first mention of Blake's name in this correspondence.

⁴ I believe this poem has not previously been published.

⁵ Where, in the house of his cousin John Johnson, Cowper had died, and where they proposed to raise a monument.

Up to this time Hayley had been fairly engrossed in his biographical duties; but in the spring of 1802 he projected a characteristically benevolent scheme which he explained to Lady Hesketh in his letter of 24 May:

Do not be surprised if you receive in about a Fortnight a Bundle of Ballads, for I have a wicked project of turning your Ladyship into a Ballad Monger for the sake of serving the excellent friendly artist, who has been working so long & so patiently by my side on our Portraits of Cowper.—He has drawn & engraved some very ingenious designs of his own to a series of singular Ballads, one of which He proposes to publish every Month with three prints annexed to it.—for the moderate price of half a Crown.—His first number will be ready in a week or two, delicately printed on a fine quarto paper, & if I send you one dozen to dispose of among yr friends I know you will not think yrself overloaded by

your sincere &

affectionate

Hermit

On the 28th Lady Hesketh replied most cordially:

I shall be happy to assist any friend of yours, but am afraid, at this time, of year Bath will be a bad place to attempt to circulate any thing new, as there will be hardly a human Being left in it but myself in a week's time!

She went on to explain who might and might not be in Bath as prospective customers:

but to return to y^e Ingenious friend and Artist, and to say how glad I shall be if you can put me in a way to do him the smallest Service: but indeed you must chalk out the method, and make the way plain, and very plain, before me, for I am more Stupid even than you ever knew me, a bold Assertion, but a true one, and I can form to myself no idea of the purport, or design, of a ballad to be publish'd once a Month! tho.' (as I think, without being a Witch, I can guess the Author) I have no doubt said ballads will be very delightful: but I repeat, that you must both Spell and put together, for you will be greatly mistaken, if you think you may venture to leave anything to my ingenuity; tell me therefore, & tell me in the plainest Terms, what I can do to serve your friend? and conclude it Done!

Evidently Hayley dispatched the first ballad to Lady Hesketh through their mutual friend Samuel Rose in London; and with this he probably enclosed some suggestions as to how Lady Hesketh should market her ballads. On 10 June he wrote to her:

If our Sussex Elephants have reached you, as I trust They have by the Guidance of our Friend Rose, you will require no commendation from me to give you a good opinion of our provincial printer!—apropos of the Elephants! you receive a smaller number, than I led you to expect: not from our apprehension that you

¹ This was Seagrave of Chichester, who was also to print the Cowper biography.

might find it difficult to metamorphose them into Half Crowns for the ingenious Artist, at a Time, when Bath is deserted, but in Truth, because the busy artist had not Time to furnish a larger number of these interesting animals for his distant Friends immediately—He & his excellent Wife (a true Helpmate!) pass the plates thro' a rolling press in their own Cottage together; & of course it is a work of some Time to collect a Number of Impressions. —But if you find, that you are likely to have many Customers in your new Trade of Ballad Monger, He will take care that you shall not want a stock in Hand, & He expresses himself highly gratified by the Honour you do Him in condescending to circulate his production—. . . I shall rejoice to hear that the Elephant has amused you—with repeated Thanks for all yr Kindness to my Friend, whose profitable servant I hope He may prove, & with a hearty wish that his whole Collection of Animals may be regarded by you as amusing Visitors, I am my dear Lady . . .

If Lady Hesketh's reaction to Hayley's proposal had been cordial, her reception of the ballad itself was enthusiastic. On 16 June she wrote:

I should not Dear Sir worry you again so very soon, was I not extremely impatient to inform you of the Arrival of that powerful but gentle beast the Elephant, and likewise of my admiration of it! I am ill qualified to speak of the Merits either of the Engravings or the ballad, but to me I confess they seem very worthy of each other, and I cannot tell how much I honor you for this fresh proof of the active part you take so readily whenever an opp^y offers of Serving your friends! your Zeal I well know dear Sir never loiters, but on the contrary is always foremost when any thing useful, or pleasing is to be done for the good of others: M^r Blake I have not the pleasure of knowing, but have no doubt that his Merits, and Talents will equally Justify the kind, and very agreeable Method you have taken to bring that Merit, and those Talents into Notice.

After praising Hayley's preface extravagantly, she went on:

and now let me say that I have done all I cou'd to second your kind intentions, having laid one in the most conspicuous part of Three of the most Conspicuous & best frequented Libraries which this City affords, having tacked to the same a few names together with my own as Sub^{ns} to this very agreeable and elegant Work. I have likewise sent one to Lord & Lady Harcourt by a very sensible amiable friend of mine, who goes this day to pass some time at Nuneham; few people have more taste than L^d & L^y H: and as they are adorers of Cowper, they will be almost as well pleased as I am with the sweet delightful manner in which you have taken notice of the friendly labor you are engaged in! . . . I know she will be charmd with the Elephant, and so will her Lord, and you may depend on their doing all in their power to Circulate the work in question. D^r Randolph was with me at the moment that your letter from Felpham, and the Paquet from London arrived together and consider'd himself as not a little fortunate in having call'd on me at that Juncture;—he read to me both the preface and the ballad and instantly set his Name down . . . he dined yes^y with Lord Spencer, & I gave

him one to shew to Him, as I shall not see him myself, tho.' he is here with his Lady.

This enthusiastic and diligent kindness inspired Hayley with a fit of fancy in his next letter of 28 June:¹

Your extreme Kindness, my dear Lady, to the Group of Elephants, that lately had the Honour of waiting upon you has so endeared you to the Tribes of the noble animals, that five imperial Eagles (who are preparing to take wing, as the immediate successors to the Train of Elephants) hope in the Course of next Week to have the pleasure of perching in your presence.—Indeed they are so eager to express their regard to you, that they meditate a Flight across the Country, to reach you by a road more expeditious than that of the Elephants, & they please themselves with an Idea of paying their respects to you, before any of their Tribe can be visible in the Metropolis.—

In sober Truth I am heartily pleased that the Ballad & its decorations found such Favour in your sight: & both the Engraver & the Hermit feel most agreeably obliged to you for your Kindness on this Occasion.—. . . If we are pleased in finding the Elephant a Favorite with the Fair, we please ourselves yet more in fancying, that the Eagle may soar to a greater Height in the sunshine of their Favour. . . —you will rejoice to hear that the good Blake & his Elephant are in triumphant spirits.

To this buoyant letter Lady Hesketh had to reply in a most deflating manner on 3 July:

Dear Sir—

From my Heart I hope that London & Chichester make ample amends to y^e ingenious Artist, for the def[ic]iciencies of Bath, which I have reason to fear is still more empty and deserted, than I thought it possible it shou'd be; even at this Season of the year! too certain however it is, that it is abandond by all those of Genius and Taste, or the Elephants must have attracted more Company; sorry I am to say that not more than half a dozen Names are yet to be found, so low are the Arts fallen in this sweet City of Bath. I flatter myself however that your bookseller in Pall Mall will have a long list of Cowpers, who I trust will gladly endeavour to atone for the deficiencies of other people. I have sent them word that I shall expect to see all their Names, and to have all their Interest exerted towards the work in hand;—and now dear Sir, may I be forgiven if I say to you, that some among the very few now here, who have any pretensions to Taste, find many defects in your friends engravings?—I know you would be much better pleased that they shou'd find fault with You than with Him whom you patronize, yet,—if M^r B: is but New in the world, may it not be in reality

¹ On this same day Hayley wrote to John Johnson: 'Our alert Blake is preparing, *con spirito*, to launch his eagle, with a lively hope of seeing him superior to the elephant . . . Lady Hesketh has received and patronized his elephant with the most obliging benignity'. Cf. A. Gilchrist, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

kinder, to point out his failings, than to suffer him to think his performances faultless.—surely it may, as it may stimulate his endeavours after Perfection!—it wou'd be wrong to name those who have dared to Criticise what I own pleased me very much: but I will try if I can put under the Seal—(for I wou'd not make you pay for a double letter) the opinion of one who I believe to have as much Taste as he has goodness, Learning, Knowledge of all kinds, both in the polite arts, and all others! he has likewise great knowledge of the world, having always liv'd in the very first Circles—He is to be sure 82!—and you may therefore suppose Him to be Superannuated;—but indeed he is not, & cou'd you see his little Billets to Ladys, and see the grace, & even gallantry, with w^{ch} he presides at our little Suppers, & the Spirits he is in at Eleven at Night you wou'd be inclined to allow some degree of Credit to his opinion—be this however as it may, I will not transcribe, but give you that part of his note that relates to the Elephant in question, because as that is in his own hand, you will think I am sure that it would be no discredit to a man of five & Thirty! there was also a certain Lady,¹ of whose skill in painting &c: you and all the world have I know a high opinion;—I dont visit her, but she was lately here, & when D^r Randolph shew'd her this (perhaps with all the enthusiastic warmth which marks his manner)—She too I know (She is a woman of Quality) made objections, chiefly I believe to the Design the Elephant not being seen in the back ground in the same piece where the man is struggling at the window, she consider'd as a defect, since no one cou'd tell how he came there? the window too shou'd have appear'd in Light as a motive to influence the motions of the Elephant & all this I heard,—whether I am wrong, or not to tell it to You Time only can discover! one thing I am sure of, that I wou'd not willingly give you Pain—there, where I know you are most Vulnerable. I mean in the person of your Friends, but I cannot help fancying that some hints from you very gently applied, as I know you will apply them, may be useful to your protégée,—and if they shou'd induce Improvement, I shall applaud myself for the liberty I have taken & for having had the courage to tell you, what perhaps nobody else will!—and now let me say, that tho.' the Eagles may have taken Wing, they have not yet arrived here; when they do I shall endeavour to receive them with all the honors due to these birds of Jove and all English as they are, shall think no Roman ones could exceed them, but pray dear Sir do not trouble yourself in future to send them here, as both myself, and the few Sub^{rs} I have got, have given orders to our booksellers to send them down and I received two more Elephants last night—. . . Examine yourself dear Sir you who have no mean taste, is there not some thing Strikingly disproportionate in the Figure of the Horse & of some of those in the first Piece? even to Me that is not agreeable at all.

It should be noted how Lady Hesketh carefully dissociates herself from

¹ H. N. Fairchild, op. cit., identifies this lady as Catherine Fanshawe, but so far as I know Catherine was not what Lady Hesketh would call a woman of Quality.

most of the criticism of the ballads expressed in this letter; how she expresses her evidently sincere regret to be the bearer of such tidings to both Hayley and Blake; and how delicately and gently she attempts to ease the blow and encourage the correction of the faults described.

Hayley was fully sensible of Lady Hesketh's kindness and salutary temerity, though modern critics have not been so tolerant. On 6 July Hayley wrote from Lavant, near Felpham:

I cannot let a single post escape me without thanking you, my dear Lady, for yr very kind Letter—Sincerity is to my Feelings the Essence of Kindness, and I take all that you so benevolently say of my worthy artist, exactly as you would wish me to take it—

Alas! I grieve to add that altho it is his constant custom to attend me to the House of the Benevolent & accomplished Lady in whose apartment I scrawl these very hasty Lines, yet today sickness detained Him in Bed—But I trust He will speedily revive under the care of perhaps the very best Wife that ever mortal possessed, at least one, that most admirably illustrates that expressive appellation a Helpmate.

He has packed off his Eagles to Kiss yr Hand, & I would not mortify him in his sickness by desiring Him to try & recall them to take a longer road to you, as I believe they will set forth by the mail coach of this day directly for Bath. When I have a little Leisure I will talk to you of my good artist & his Wife, for both of whom you will feel a benevolent increasing Interest when I can delineate their Merits for yr Inspection.—

Hayley had been having trouble obtaining paper for his printer, for Johnson, his London publisher of the Cowper biography (who would normally be expected to be responsible for the printing too) was dilatory in supplying the paper he had promised. Hayley concluded his letter by speculating whether he might not have done better to arrange

(as Blake has done for his Ballads) to deal with his own stationer in London, & send it down as He thought proper¹ . . . you will Kindly sympathise in my vexation, & by a Kind report of the Eagles safe arrival at Bath console

your troubled & affectionate

Hermit

Hayley's respect for Blake's arrangements is interesting, because in most business circumstances Blake was notably unfortunate. Blake himself had a hearty respect for Hayley's commercial ability, and he wrote to his brother James: 'I should never have known the nature of Publication unless I had known H. & his connexions & his method of managing.'²

¹ Blake made the same arrangements for the book form of the ballads; cf. *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. G. Keynes (London, 1948), p. 906.

² *Ibid.*, p. 863, letter of 30 January 1803.

Encouraged by Hayley's generous reply, Lady Hesketh ventured another criticism, this time of her own, in her next letter of 10 July:

Dear Sir, I lose as little time as possible in acquainting you of the Arrival of those Imperial birds the Eagles, who arrived safe, and alighted at my Door the day before yesterday.—I dare give no opinion in regard to the Engravings, as I certainly place no dependance on my own Judgment in these matters, and have not yet been able to consult that of others—to me I own they appear more perfect than the Elephants, but that may be fancy—I have however one objection of my own to make.—I'm afraid you will say 'tis a very feminine one! but will you not at the same time Join with me in opinion that y^r ingenious friend pays little Respect to the "Human Face Divine" for certainly the Countenances of his women and Children are nothing less than pleasing [*sic*]:—the figure of the woman hovering over her child is fine, but her Countenance is to me rather unpleasant, and that of the Child extremely so, without any of those Infantine Graces which few babies are without, and which are to me so delightful—in short the faces of his babies are not young, and this I cannot pardon! may I be allow'd after all this to say that the ballad is delightful, & ye Story true I conclude, astonishing & miraculous as it certainly appears! . . . I really wish to thank you dear Sir a thousand times, for the Justice you do to my intentions, and for the kindness with which you have receiv'd the Criticisms I was Impertinent enough to send you, and which I really ventur'd not without some Scruples of conscience, and some anxiety of Mind, but when you say "you take my animadversions as I meant you shou'd" I feel quite easy and nothing remains but to be gratefull. I sincerely hope that before you receive this all your anxieties, respecting the health of this amiable friend of yours, will be at an end;—you must have many anxious moments I am sure in respect to your biographical troubles & torments: & need not the additional pain of trembling for the health of those you love. . . & now let me observe that I think you mistook my meaning in regard to the not troubling yourself to send the ballads. I only meant that as my bookseller has orderd the bookseller in Pall Mall to send down the numbers as they come out, I thot it needless to trouble you any further. tho.' I do certainly feel rather proud of being possessd of my Eagles before [any] of the Londoners have had a Glympse at their feathers.

Curiously enough, it was at this point that Hayley took fire at Lady Hesketh's previous letter of 3 July, and penned a defence of Blake,¹ which, despite its generosity and delicacy, strikingly ignores both Blake's greatest talents and Lady Hesketh's criticisms:

Pray suffer no Mortal, my dear Lady, however you may give them Credit for refined Taste in art, to prejudice you against the works of that too feeling artist, whose designs met with so little Mercy from your Octogenaire admirable! I allow the aimable Veillard to be as severe as He pleases, as we happily counteactr

¹ On 15 July 1802.

his Censure with the applause of a more competent, but also a nameless Judge, who has said, I think with more Truth, that there is great spirit & sentiment in the engravings of my Friend.—To this variety of opinions I apply the lively words of the goodhumoured Goldini on a similar subject—"Ciascuno ha la sua maniera d'operare: gli uni trovano buono, quel che altri han trovato cattivo, e ne risulta piu bene che male."—Whatever the Merits, or the Failings of my diligent & grateful artist may be, I know I shall interest your Heart & Soul in his Favour, when I tell you, that He resembles our beloved Bard in the Tenderness of his Heart, & in the perilous powers of an Imagination utterly unfit to take due Care of Himself—with admirable Faculties, his sensibility is so dangerously acute, that the common rough Treatment which true genius often receives from ordinary Minds in the commerce of the World, might not only wound Him more than it should do, but really reduce Him to the Incapacity of an Ideot without the consolatory support of a considerate Friend.—From these excesses of Feeling, & of irregular Health (forever connected with such excesses) His productions must ever perhaps be unequal, but in all He does, however wild or hasty, a penetrating Eye will discover true Genius, & if it were possible to Keep his too apprehensive Spirit for a Length of Time unruffled, He would produce Works of the pencil, almost as excellent & original, as those works of the pen, which flowed from the dear poet, of whom He often reminds me by little Touches of nervous Infirmary, when his mind is darkend with any unpleasant apprehension.—He reminds me of him also by being a most fervent admirer of the Bible, & intimately acquainted with all its Beauties—I wish our beloved Bard had been as happy in a Wife, for Heaven has bestowed on this extraordinary mortal perhaps the only female on Earth, who could have suited Him exactly. They have now been married more than 17 years & are as fond of each other, as if their Honey Moon were still shining—They live in a neat little Cottage, which they both regard as the most delightful residence ever inhabited by a mortal; they have no servant:—the good woman not only does all the work of the House, but she even makes the greater part of her Husbands dress, & assists him in his art—she draws, she engraves, & sings delightfully, & is so truly the Half of her good Man, that they seem animated by one Soul, & that a soul of indefatigable Industry & Benevolence—it sometimes hurries them both to labour rather too much, & I had some time ago the pain of seeing both confined to their Bed.—I endeavour to be as kind as I can to two Creatures so very interesting & meritorious, & indeed I consider it as a point of devotion to the two dear departed angels (Cowper & Tom!) to be so, for I am confident I could gratify their Spirits in nothing so much, as in befriending two wonderful Beings, whom they both, were they still on Earth, & possess of Health, would peculiarly delight to befriend.—¹

¹ It is curious that Blake did not know Hayley's son, for he was apprenticed to Flaxman, one of Blake's best friends, from 1795 more or less to his death; but this reference, coupled with the lack of personal reference to Thomas in Blake's letter of condolence to Hayley—cf. G. Keynes, op. cit., p. 838—seems to indicate that they did not know each other.

To this extraordinary letter Lady Hesketh replied with extraordinary poise and point. On 22 July she wrote:

The account you have so kindly sent me dear Sir of your amiable Protégée's, was not necessary to Impress me with a favorable opinion of their Merit.—and I could have no doubt of the good qualities both of heart and head of those who are so distinguish'd by your friendship, and the affectionate Interest you take in them;—it was only respecting the Gentlemans Skill as an Engraver, that I took the Impertinent liberty of hinting my doubts, in which I say, with regret that I have been too well authorized; and indeed I hope you do not think I obtruded my own Opinion in this Subject, in which I am perfectly Incompetent to give any, except the idle one I hazarded in my last, as to the "human face Divine" which I really think shou'd always be made as Handsome as possible, (those of women & children particularly) unless where there is a reason for making them otherwise, I must however beg leave to observe, that this, my only Criticism, does not in the least impeach your friends character either as a painter or an Engraver, for Hogarth who excell'd so much, & whose fame will never dye, made all his children frightful! . . .—and now dear Sir as I have assur'd you with great truth that I have never presum'd to offer any opinion of my own on the Subject of your amiable Friends performances; and have only Ecchoed those of others, and others who I knew were Judges, I must likewise assure you that nothing should have tempted me to have made so unpleasant a Confidence, even to you, but that I know M^r B: is to furnish some Engravings for a work where (not I alone, but) all the world will grieve should the pencil prove only a Foil to the Pen;—the general Wish is that they should be worthy of each other! . . . [I agree with Goldini that tastes differ, but] it does however sometimes happen (however rarely) that the same performance meets the general approbation, and this I shou'd wish might be the Case with those engravings which are to be honor'd with a place in your interesting Work—and now I can't help lamenting the resemblance which you imagine Subsists between your friend and Him who will ever live in our remembrance! from my Heart I pity all those who are under the Dominion of such acute and delicate feelings . . . I must now say that I am grieved you are again suffering in the persons of your friends!—large Connections whatever pleasure they may at times procure us, are the Cause of much Sorrow, as they make us vulnerable in so many Quarters from all these Sorrows the Selfish heart, feeling for itself alone seems Secure, but I don't believe that idea will engage you to circumscribe your feelings into that Confined Circle. I shall therefore content myself with sincerely wishing recover'd health to your friends for Your Sake as well as their own.

To this bold letter Hayley made no specific reply, except to remark in his next letter of 28 July:

I have been alarmed again for the Health of my interesting Artist, but He also is reviving, & I hope a Lion, that He is eagerly preparing as a successor

to his Eagle, will have the Honor of Kissing yr Hand in the Course of next week—¹

The last that we hear of this stage of the Battle of the Ballads is in Lady Hesketh's letter of 15 October 1802, written from London, in which she apologizes for not having answered Hayley's letter:

one other proof, equally Shameful with the former of my Loss of memory, and of my having left my Recollection, as well as my Gratitude at Bath, appears in my totally forgetting 'till Just now my debts to your Ingenious friend M^r Blake, who honord me more than I appear to have deserv'd, by the two packets of ballads he was so good to send me;—I think I had ten from Felpham, five of each of the two first;—the rest my bookseller at Bath has regularly from London, as well as those I take in for my Sist^r and some other friends,—but for the above mentiond I am still deb^tr to M^r Blake and shall this day send a draft to our good friend M^r Rose for Five guineas which trifling Sum I flatter myself M^r Blake will have the goodness to accept, as I have [[?]decided] our worthy Barrister will forward it with this Letter—

It seems probable that Lady Hesketh received slightly more ballads than she acknowledged here; but in any case she was extremely generous in a cause which had been forced upon her, for ten ballads at two-and-six apiece comes to only one pound five shillings.

On 20 December Hayley wrote to say that his printer was still having trouble getting paper to finish printing the Cowper biography; and, he went on;

my Friend the anxious, enthusiastic Engraver says, that all the Demons, who tormented our dear Cowper when living, are now labouring to impede the publication of his Life.—To which I reply that it may be so, but if it is, I am confident my two dear Angels the Bard & the Sculptor will assist us in our Conflict with the powers of darkness, “& enable us to triumph over all their Machinations.” . . . I know your tender Humanity will spare my good zealous Coadjutor the Engraver, if you think He has failed in one Portrait, as I am confident you must think He has succeeded delightfully in the second—His plate from Romney has not all the merit of his own drawing in India Ink whence He formed it, but his print from Lawrence is infinitely superior to Bartolozzi's in tender Fidelity to the Character of the original.

¹ According to Gilchrist, op. cit., p. 143, Hayley and Blake began the ballads in the summer of 1801. His evidence seems to have been a letter dated August 1801 from Hayley to John Johnson, which he accurately transcribed. ‘Our good Blake is actually in labour with a young lion. The newborn cub will probably kiss your hands in a week or two. The Lion is his 3d Ballad, and we hope this plate to it will surpass its predecessors.’ Though he did not acknowledge his debt, Gilchrist's source was the *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Hayley, Esq.* . . . written by himself, ed. J. Johnson (London, 1823), where the date is given as 6 August 1801. The year obviously should be 1802, and Gilchrist's conclusion altered accordingly.

This is the last dated letter from Hayley in these collections until 18 July 1805.

On 23 December 1802 Lady Hesketh most tactfully allayed any apprehensions which may have been entertained in Felpham, for on that date she wrote:

well, and now dear Sir I must say (and you will I hope forgive me if I say) that however your friend may have faild in copying M^r Romneys picture I forgive him from my heart beforehand. . . . if M^r Blake has succeeded happily in that of Lawrence he will have answer'd all my wishes, for as to the other he cannot possibly have done it Injustice!—

And as if this were not submissive enough, on 29 December, the day after the biography finally arrived, she added a postscript to her long eulogy of Hayley's work:

I must tell you that I admire Romneys likeness of all things! now it is Softend! of the engraving I pretend not to Judge, but I like it.

In the new year, on 10 January 1803, she wrote further of this engraving:

N B: the only thing my Sister has particularized is the print from Romney which She dislikes as much as ever, but to which I am perfectly reconciled, as a Print I mean for my abhorrence of the Miniature is in its full force but this Engraving has an effect totally different from that.

And further, on 15 January she wrote that she likes the print from Romney:

I forget whether I told you how greatly I am reconciled, and softend, in favor of your friend Romney's Likeness of Cowper, and this I hope will serve to prove to you that I am not the Slave of prejudice, the print softens it extremely & it has not that distracted and distracting look which prevails in the miniature.

These remarks were clearly a source of some satisfaction to Blake and Hayley; and, moreover, the Ballads seem to have begun moving now. On 30 January 1803 Blake wrote to his brother James:

I am now so full of work that I have had no time to go on with the Ballads, & my prospects of more & more work continually are certain. My Heads of Cowper for Mr. H's life of Cowper have pleased his Relations exceedingly & in Particular Lady Hesketh & Lord Cowper—to please Lady H. was a doubtful chance who almost ador'd her Cousin the poet & thought him all perfection, & she writes that she is quite satisfied with the portraits & charm'd by the great Head in particular, tho' she never could bear the original Picture. . . .

I send with this 5 Copies of N₄ of the Ballads . . . These Ballads are likely to be Profitable, for we have Sold all that we have had time to print. Evans the Bookseller in Pall Mall says they go off very well.¹

¹ G. Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 864.

But in all probability Blake and Hayley had about exhausted the patience of their charitable friends by this time. At any rate new projects were now engrossing both men.

In April of 1803 Hayley evidently suggested that a protégé of his should paint Lady Hesketh's portrait, but on 13 April she rejected the suggestion, saying that she was too old for such frivolities. Hayley seems not to have mentioned the name of his candidate, and Lady Hesketh naturally assumed it was Blake, though Hayley's description of a 'young' artist scarcely tallied with a man who had been married over seventeen years. Hayley must have persisted in his request, for on 20 April Lady Hesketh wrote:

you thought that I did not see thro.' your ingenious intention, of making work for M^r B: at y^e expense of your Humble Servant . . . I was fully aware of your illicit intentions from the moment I read your first letter upon the Subject. . . . [Though I will not have my portrait painted], if your protegee, will accept of 5 Guineas at my hands, they shall be at his Service, and I shall receive a very real pleasure from making this little offering, because he is your protegee.

She further remarked that some people had criticized the engravings in the Cowper biography, and had suggested that 'M^r Hayley shou'd have endeavor'd after a pencil more nearly allied to his admirable Pen'. It is probable that complaints made to Lady Hesketh by her friends gradually soured her opinion of Blake.¹ On 1 July she acknowledged with thanks Hayley's gift of his *Triumphs of Temper*, with engravings by Blake; but, she wrote, 'I am disappointed in the Prints', and entered into a long criticism of them. It was unfortunate that Lady Hesketh's opinion of Blake was founded upon some of his least interesting work.

Meanwhile the affair of the portrait of Lady Hesketh dragged on. On 15 May 1803 she wrote in high dudgeon to complain of Hayley's having sent his protégé to call on her in Bath, against her expressed wishes. On 14 September she wrote to commiserate with Hayley on the suicide of his friend Dudman; and on 23 September she returned to the subject, alluding to her one contact with the man when he had called to persuade her to let him paint her portrait. Surely this solves the problem raised by Hayley's omission in specifying which protégé was to get the commission.

The next references to Blake concern the incident in which he turned a soldier out of his garden and was subsequently tried for sedition. The incident occurred in August 1803, and Hayley evidently described it to Lady Hesketh. She did not comment on this until 27 November, when she wrote:

By the way I have never taken up the Subject you mention'd to me concerning

¹ About this time, perhaps, Hayley complained that 'some persons and ladies in particular . . . have supposed Romney's portrait of him [Cowper] to border on extravagance of expression'. W. Hayley, *The Life of George Romney, Esq* (London, 1809), p. 178.

M^r Blake, and this, because I had at the time great reason to fear that your kind unsuspecting Friendship was drawing you into a Scrape, for one who did not merit that you shou'd incur blame on his account;—if I mistook this affair I am sorry for it, and ask his pardon as well as yours, but to own the truth, He appeard to me much to blame, even upon his own representation of the matter, but if I may give credit to some reports which reachd me at that time, M^r B: was more Seriously to blame than you were at all aware of I believe—but I will only add on this Subject—that—if he was, I sincerely hope that you are no Stranger to it!

It is a great pity that the letters which elicited and answered this one do not seem to have survived.

Blake's trial, in which he was defended by Samuel Rose,¹ took place in January 1804, and Hayley evidently wrote to Lady Hesketh about it at once. On 1 February Lady Hesketh squeezed her good wishes into the last available space of her paper:

Sincerely do I congratulate you on the acquittal of your friend & on the kindness & Eloquence of our good Rose. You are so Staunch and Jealous in your friendships once made that you cannot be too careful in your choice.

The briefness and indirectness of this comment on an event which so filled Hayley's life is an indication of Lady Hesketh's growing distrust of Blake. She had heard her own version of the incident with the soldier; and her suspicion extended to Blake's art. On 15 November 1804 she asked 'that no inferior or midling artists, may ever more be [sufferd] to lay their insufficient Hands on any future work of yours!' She wrote further, I am 'ardent in my wishes that the ingenious Catherine² shou'd have the Glory of embellishing your Work'. Moreover, she had written to tell her candidate that the commission was hers. In this instance she was unsuccessful; but her desire that Blake's engravings should be replaced evidently persuaded Hayley to incur this additional expense. Five months later Blake received the information that Caroline Watson, another favourite of Lady Hesketh's, had been asked to make the engravings for the 1805 edition of the Cowper biography.³

In the summer of 1805 once again the Battle of the Ballads was taken up. It began amicably enough when, on 18 July, Hayley wrote that he was sending Lady Hesketh a packet.

I say packet because my Billet is to travel to you with a little Book, a respectful offering of Gratitude to you from a very industrious tho not a very prosperous artist—Smile on his Gratitude, tho you will frown on some productions of his

¹ Blake and Rose were certainly well known to each other by this time.

² This is probably Catherine Fanshawe.

³ Cf. G. Keynes, op. cit., p. 906.

pencil; particularly the last in the little volume, which He thinks his best!—so little can artists & authors judge of their own recent Composition

As to the Failings of the Ballads themselves, they perhaps may be allowed to find shelter in the Mantle of Charity so famous for covering Sins of all sorts, at least they will meet with that indulgence from your GoodNature, my dear Lady, as I will Whisper in your Ear, that I printed them only, that they may prove more beneficial in this pocket size to the diligent artist, who laboured in the Cause of dear Cowper with more Zeal, than Success—but as Addison tells us in his Cato

“Tis not in Mortals to command success”.

At this point Lady Hesketh could not forbear remonstrating; on 27 July she replied:

Surely my dear Sir you are gifted with more true Charity, than falls to the lot of most mortals, (or that perhaps one wou'd wish there should) if you can not only forgive but continue to protect, and cherish, one, (whom, for y^e Sake, I ever tremble to think of, and whom certainly I will not name! and now let me, before I say another word, return you a thousand thanks for your sweet little work of which I did not at all know that the whole were come out, and was rather surpris'd when a Lady of my acquaintance told me that her bookseller had sent her Hayley's ballads . . . I apprehended the work had been laid aside, the rather as I knew you had undertaken it with a benevolent intention which I imagin'd you had not Judg'd necessary to carry thro.' . . . [It] has given me much Entertainment . . . I confess I think with you that the Horse is a little extra! to say nothing of the extreme composure of the Lady, but I was never form'd to Criticize any of the Sister arts, and shall leave to abler Judges to decide on the merits of the Engravings . . . I wish I cou'd say which of these ballads pleases most, but 'tis difficult.

On 3 August Hayley replied to this letter. In the beginning of his letter he answered Lady Hesketh's queries about the genesis of the ballad stories, and then he went on:

Now let me say, you made me smile, my dear Lady, by your supposition, that your Hermit has a super-abundance of Christian charity,

“Whose heavenly spirit sanctifies Excess”—

I perceive by your striking Intimation, that you have heard some extraordinary Incidents relating to poor Blake, incorrectly, if not malevolently, reported.—you wonder, that I should continue to befriend Him; but I must be a despicable mortal in my own opinion, if I utterly renounced a very industrious,

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 907–8; the plate ‘for that ballad of The Horse . . . I consider as one of my best’. Cf. also *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti to William Allingham 1854–1870*, ed. G. B. Hill (London, 1897), p. 158: ‘Ruskin’s favourite (who has just been looking at it) is the Horse; but I can’t myself quite get over the intensity of comic decorum in the brute’s face. He seems absolutely snuffling with propriety.’

tho not a very successful artist, who, while his Zeal in my service induced him to work peacably in this Village, was involved (by residing here) in as vexatious, & unjust a persecution, as an innocent, well-meaning Creature could possibly fall into.—The Fact simply was, that a brutal quarrelsome soldier (a degraded sargent) intruded into the Garden of Blake's Cottage, & refused to quit it—Blake who has Courage, agility, & strength, seized the abusive Intruder, & pushed Him (over several paces of Ground) to the door of his Quarters. The vindictive soldier provoked to Frenzy, swore He would have the artist hanged, & actually engaged a comrade to swear also, in league with Himself, that Blake had uttered the most horrible seditious Expressions.—our dear Rose made an Eloquent speech in the Cause of the poor artist entangled in the snare of these perjured Wretches; but it was not the Eloquence of an advocate, that saved the innocent man on his Trial, & Heaven seemed to show, in a striking manner, that He was to owe his security to different defenders: for our beloved Barrister, who had caught his fatal Cold in the Evening of the preceding day, felt the Faculties of his admirable Head desert him, before He concluded; & failed to reply, (as He otherwise would have done,) to the art and the Malevolence of the opposite Counsel—yet his client was safe—for Providence had graciously raised for Him a little host of honest & friendly rustic Witnesses; particularly one benevolent, clear-headed woman, (the Wife of a Millers servant) whose Garden adjoined to Blake's, & who, by her shrewd Remarks, clearly proved several impossibilities in the false accusation.

In Truth this diligent & quiet artist was cordially regarded by his rustic neighbours; & the citizens of Chichester (as I probably told you at the Time) were loud in the honest Exultation of their joy in his Acquittal.—I of course rejoiced most cordially in the public Testimony of his Innocence; & shall ever be glad to do Him all the little good in my power, & for extraordinary reasons, (that may make you smile) because He is very apt to fail in his art:—a species of failing peculiarly entitled to pity in Him, since it arises from nervous Irritation, & a too vehement desire to excell.—I have also ever wished to befriend Him from a motive, that, I know, our dear angelic Cowper would approve, because this poor man with an admirable quickness of apprehension, & with uncommon powers of mind, has often appeared to me on the verge of Insanity:—But Heaven, who has graciously assigned to Him, as an invaluable Helpmate, perhaps the only Woman on Earth, who could have perfectly suited Him as a wife, will continue, I hope, to watch over this singularly Endangered mortal, unfit in Truth to take Care of Himself in a world like this!—

Lady Hesketh's next letter, on 1 September 1805, brings to a dry close the sections of this correspondence which refer to William Blake.

In regard to a certain Artist I will remem^{ber} the Story of the Soldier, & of the pains our poor Rose took in that affair, but it was not to that I alluded when I ventur'd to testify my Surprise at the obstinacy of y^r Friendship after the very

strong and proper Causes you had to withdraw it, but I must allow you to have the merits of this affair better than I can do ¹ so will say no more about it except to say that it is my [*concern*] you may not be a Sufferer from your goodness and unbounded Confidence.

A few words may suffice to summarize the known and the underestimated facets of Blake's life which this correspondence emphasizes. First, a genuine friendship existed between Hayley and Blake which was productive of considerable benefit to Blake both financially and in defence of his character. Second, only Blake's status as an artist is revealed in these letters, and no hint of any kind is given that he was also a poet. Third, Hayley was considerably impressed by the talents and virtues of Catherine Blake, whom he regarded as Blake's chief support; a fact which makes more understandable Blake's apparent charge that Hayley tried to 'act upon my wife'.² Fourth, Hayley was acutely aware of what he thought to be Blake's dangerous sensitivity or mental instability which, combined with Hayley's patronizing kindness, may account for part of the violence with which Blake reacted towards him in private. It is quite possible that Hayley connected this mental instability, as others had that of Cowper, with Blake's religious ideas; and perhaps when he described Blake as enthusiastic he had in mind the eighteenth-century sense of fanatic.³ Certainly he never tried to defend Blake's orthodoxy to Lady Hesketh. And finally, Blake's encounter with the soldier in the garden, and its repercussions, made enough stir for news of it to reach Lady Hesketh, and that in a version not favourable to Blake. Her most likely source of information was Samuel Rose, who defended Blake.

These letters give a clear picture of how Blake's personal and artistic reputation took shape among a certain group in early nineteenth-century England. With these letters before us it is perhaps difficult to remember that the humble enthusiastic engraver to which they so frequently refer believed that

I am in God's presence night & day,
And he never turns his face away.⁴

But it is easier to understand how he could write some years later:

Tuesday, Janry. 20, 1807, between Two & Seven in the Evening—Despair.⁵

¹ At this point the old lady's pen ran dry, but her eyes had become so bad that she did not notice to dip it for three words, which have left a small gap in the letter. Just above, the words 'proper Causes' are a doubtful reading and, below, 'concern' is also doubtful.

² G. Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 656.

³ Cf. p. 266 n. 2.

⁴ G. Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 693.

ONE SOURCE OF CONRAD'S *NOSTROMO*

By IVO VIDAN

JOSEPH CONRAD'S notes on his books, though often giving an insight into various sources of a particular work, do not by any means exhaust all the facts relevant to its origin. J. D. Gordan states that the origin of *Lord Jim* was fourfold, in observation, personal experience, hearsay, and reading.¹ This remark certainly applies to many or most of Conrad's other works. Gordan also shows that Conrad must have read about Rajah James Brooke of Sarawak before writing the second half of *Lord Jim*, as the outline of the story, many incidents, and the characterization recall details from Brooke's life and from books about him.² But no direct reference to Brooke or Brookiana is to be found in Conrad's published work and correspondence. The case is similar with other works by Conrad. Thus, one source of *The Duel*³ and one of *Suspense*⁴ have been ascertained, neither of which Conrad ever mentioned so far as existing records show. He never had the occasion to do so in the case of *Suspense*, as the novel remained unfinished and was published only after his death. It also appears that he had read the lately discovered source of *The Duel* some thirty years before writing the story. Its details had vanished from his conscious memory until a brief reference to it in a newspaper (which he acknowledges in his prefatory note to *A Set of Six*) brought them back to his mind without his realizing, apparently, that he had known them before.

With reference to *Nostromo* Conrad writes, '... the first hint for "*Nostromo*" came to me in the shape of a vagrant anecdote completely destitute of valuable details', and he explains that in 1875 or 1876 in the Gulf of Mexico he heard 'the story of some man who was supposed to have stolen single-handed a whole lighter-full of silver'.⁵ He forgot the story till twenty-six or twenty-seven years afterwards he came upon it 'in a shabby volume picked up outside a second-hand bookshop'. It was the life story of an American seaman written by himself with the assistance of a journalist. In Conrad, characteristically,

... the curious confirmation of the few casual words heard in ... early youth evoked the memories of that distant time when everything was so fresh, so surprising, so venturesome, so interesting; ... Yet I did not see anything at first in the mere story. ... It was only when it dawned upon me that the purloiner of

¹ John Dozier Gordan, *Joseph Conrad, The Making of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), p. 57.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-73.

³ J. De Lancey Ferguson: 'The Plot of Conrad's *The Duel*', *M.L.N.*, 1 (1935), 385-90.

⁴ Miriam Hately Wood, 'A Source of Conrad's *Suspense*', *ibid.*, 390-4.

⁵ *Nostromo*, in *Collected Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad* (London, 1946), p. vii.

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the treasure need not necessarily be a confirmed rogue, that he could be even a man of character, an actor and possibly a victim in the changing scenes of a revolution, it was only then that I had the first vision of a twilight country which was to become the province of Sulaco, with its high shadowy Sierra and its misty Campo for mute witnesses of events flowing from the passions of men short-sighted in good and evil.¹

We further learn that Conrad received the inspiration for *Nostromo's* personality in his early days from a Mediterranean sailor, Dominic, whom, roughly at the time of writing *Nostromo*, or slightly later, he immortalized in the 'Tremolino' episode of *The Mirror of the Sea*. He modelled another inhabitant of his 'Sulaco', Antonia Avellanos, on his first love.²

In Conrad's published letters no further source of *Nostromo* is indicated, except for his humorous apologies to R. B. Cunninghame Graham for 'stealing' his 'y dentista' anecdote from him.³ In an earlier letter, written while he was working on *Nostromo*, he complains: 'I am dying over that cursed *Nostromo* thing. All my memories of Central America seem to slip away. I just had a glimpse twenty-five years ago—a short glance. That is not enough *pour bâtir un roman dessus*.'⁴ This alone makes one wonder whether he did not try to re-create the South American scene for himself with the help of books.

In *The Essential Cunninghame Graham*, a representative selection from Graham's works,⁵ there are two short extracts from his book *Portrait of a Dictator*, in which some circumstances, particularly those connected with the name Decoud, strangely remind one of important details in *Nostromo*. *Portrait of a Dictator* is the history of Paraguay from 1865 to 1870, when Paraguay, ruled by the ruthless Francisco Solano Lopez, was waging against Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay a war which not only brought defeat to the country, but ended with the extermination of the majority of its people. The book was first published in 1933 and obviously could not have influenced Conrad, though he may have been impressed by verbal reports of Cunninghame Graham's personal experiences on his visit to Paraguay immediately after the end of the war and the death of Lopez. Certainly it is very likely to have been Cunninghame Graham who drew Conrad's attention to some of the literature dealing with South America. In *Portrait of a Dictator* he mentions a number of books he himself used, referring especially to *Seven Eventful Years in Paraguay* by G. F. Masterman, from which he took his description of the main incident reprinted in *The Essential Cunninghame Graham*.

A reading of Masterman's work proves undoubtedly not only that this

¹ *Nostromo*, in *Collected Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad* (London, 1946), pp. viii-ix.

² *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xiv.

³ G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad, Life and Letters* (London, 1927), i. 337.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁵ Ed. P. Bloomfield (London, 1952).

book was read by Conrad before or in the initial stages of his writing of *Nostromo*, but also that a considerable number of characters, incidents, names, and other details were drawn from it. Almost all of them are in some way related to Masterman's experiences of atrocious tyranny and terror during the rule of President Lopez.

To start with what seems most obvious, the names of most of the important characters from *Nostromo* appear in Masterman's book. A certain Carlos Decoud is mentioned near the beginning in an account of an unhappy incident, bearing a remote similarity to the Martin Decoud situation in *Nostromo*. (Masterman describes a girl he saw lamenting the death of her fiancé Decoud, killed because she had refused improper offers from Lopez himself.)¹ Padre Corbelán, one of the first priests to suffer at the hands of Lopez,² has a haughty, proud sister, whose behaviour in the face of many personal losses reminds one of Antonia Avellanos,³ the niece of Conrad's Father Corbelán. Even more than the mourning fiancée of Decoud she foreshadows Antonia. A General Barrios figures as one of the important military persons of Paraguay, and is first mentioned as commanding 'the force sent up the river' in an important military move,⁴ very much like his counterpart in the novel. Mr. Gould, the British Chargé d'Affaires, who is not personally involved in the Paraguayan tragedy, does not remind one very much of his fictional namesake, except by his power to give a sober appreciation of the general situation in the country.⁵ Captain Fidanza, an Italian, has only lent his name to Conrad's 'Capataz des Cargadores'.⁶ As we have seen, more important sources for this personage have been indicated by the author himself. The character of Lieutenant-Commander Michell⁷ is not delineated by Masterman clearly enough to support the conjecture that he gave Conrad anything but his name. It is interesting that in another book relevant to the same subject his name is spelled Mitchell as in the novel.⁸ Finally, 'Mr. Monygham, an English sculptor', makes a short appearance; he is seen for an instant while he is being put to torture.⁹

But the Dr. Monygham in *Nostromo*, first medical officer of the San

¹ G. F. Masterman, *Seven Eventful Years in Paraguay* (London, 1869), pp. 34-36.

² Ibid., p. 44.

³ Ibid., pp. 111-14.

⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 241, 269, 280, 311, 320.

⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

⁸ R. F. Burton, *Letters from the Battle-fields of Paraguay* (London, 1870), p. 329. There is no other evidence which could lead us to assume that Conrad read this book. Burton's work lacks Masterman's impressive details, as it is written by a cautious outsider without first-hand experience of life under Lopez, who tries to remain impartial. Neither is there any reason to believe that Conrad was acquainted with other books by eye-witnesses of the same events. He would hardly be interested in George Thompson's *The War in Paraguay* (London, 1869), but A. C. Washburn's *History of Paraguay* (Boston and New York, 1871) could have provided him with fascinating material on loyalty and betrayal, a recurrent theme in his work, especially as Washburn considerably amplifies some aspects of Masterman's own adventures.

⁹ Masterman, op. cit., p. 296.

Tomé mine and later Inspector of State Hospitals, who perhaps can be considered as the central intelligence of the novel, is in many ways to be identified with the author of the source-book himself: George Frederick Masterman, late Assistant Surgeon, Professor of Materia Medica, Chief Military Apothecary, General Hospital, Asuncion, Paraguay.¹ As his book shows, during the Lopez rule he, like some other foreigners, was imprisoned, falsely accused of treason and conspiracy, and tortured in order to make him confess. As with Dr. Monygham in the novel, the investigators succeeded in breaking his resistance, the main torturer of both being a priest—Father Roman in Masterman's case, Father Beran in *Nostromo*.² Their identity, in spite of the slight distortion of the name, can easily be proved:

He was, as an army chaplain, dressed in lieutenant's uniform, and wore a sword; all that pointed out his clerical character being a small red cross on his left breast, and the little stubby tonsure on his crown . . . (Masterman, p. 287).

That priest was a big round-shouldered man, with an unclean-looking, overgrown tonsure on the top of his flat head, of a dingy, yellow complexion, softly fat, with greasy stains all down the front of his lieutenant's uniform, and a small cross embroidered in white cotton on his left breast (*Nostromo*, p. 371).

The same question 'Will you confess?'³ was being repeated while the prisoner was put into the *cepo uruguayana*. This elaborate method of torture is not called by its technical name by Conrad. But the description of it is vivid enough:

A piece of string and a ramrod; a few muskets in combination with a length of hide rope; or even a simple mallet of heavy, hard wood applied with a swing to human fingers or to the joints of a human body is enough for the infliction of the most exquisite torture (*Nostromo*, p. 373).

Here is one of the several instances of a corresponding description in Masterman's book:

One of the men tied my arms tightly behind me, the other passed a musket under my knees, and then putting his foot between my shoulders forced my head down until my throat rested on the lower musket; a second was put over the back of my neck, and they were firmly lashed together. They left me so for some time, striking the but-ends of the fire locks occasionally with a mallet . . . (Masterman, p. 257).

The haunting atmosphere of horror and moral breakdown is apparent all through Masterman's clear but pedestrian descriptions. Conrad recreated it in a powerful picture with a lasting impact, starting from a few

¹ Masterman, op. cit., p. iii.

² There is also a minor figure called Father Roman in *Nostromo*, a priest attached to the San Tomé mine (p. 103).

³ e.g. Masterman, p. 257; *Nostromo*, p. 371.

matter-of-fact statements of Masterman's and elaborating them, as in the first example given above, or, discarding the technical explanation, reducing them to their naked essentials, as in the second.

The torture episode, however essential for the general atmosphere of the book, occupies only a few pages in *Nostromo*; but other motives, even more important for the plot itself, seem also to be derived from Masterman.

The terrorist party's capture of a ship is one of the incidents which are given special prominence in the description of the crucial events with which the hostilities between Paraguay and her neighbours opened.¹ It reminds one of Sotillo's attempt to conquer Sulaco from the sea. Another significant incident is the attempt to save a treasure from enemy hands by sending it away by boat.²

A few other persons mentioned by Masterman remind one of inhabitants of Conrad's Sulaco. The old Don José, imprisoned by Lopez, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had been to England and the United States,³ can easily be identified with the aristocratic Don José Avellanos, former ambassador of Costaguana to England and Spain, who we are told also suffered imprisonment before the action of *Nostromo* takes place.⁴ In the title of Don José's imaginary work *History of Fifty Years of Misrule*, to which Conrad so often pretends to refer in the course of his novel (and also in his Author's note to *Nostromo*,⁵ in which he does not mention Masterman!), one may perhaps see an echo of *Seven Eventful Years in Paraguay*.

The fatal Mrs. Lynch, the Irish mistress of President Lopez, makes one think of Conrad's heroine, Mrs. Gould, who also came from Europe to play an important part in the affairs of Costaguana. It is interesting to speculate whether Mrs. Lynch's record left by Masterman provoked Conrad to create the idealized, noble personality of Mrs. Gould as a direct contrast. Among minor figures who can be compared, an English chief engineer⁶ among a number of English mechanics⁷ may be mentioned. It can hardly be suggested that the casual reference to Paraguayan mines with their English engineer can have done much to inspire Conrad in his conception of the central function of the San Tomé mine in Costaguanan affairs, but it is also interesting to notice that the Paraguayan railway, like the one in Sulaco, was built under the supervision of English civil engineers.⁸

Masterman's book begins with a description of the Paraguayan scene, particularly of the capital Asuncion, which later becomes the scene of many of the pathetic and tragic events described. A parallel with the opening of *Nostromo* may appear far-fetched, especially as the quality of the descriptions cannot be compared. But it is undeniable that reading

¹ Masterman, p. 91. ² Ibid., p. 337. ³ Ibid., pp. 276, 293-4. ⁴ *Nostromo*, p. 50.

⁵ Ibid., p. x. ⁶ Masterman, p. 14. ⁷ Ibid., p. 81. ⁸ Ibid., p. 188.

about the Custom House of Asuncion one thinks of the Custom House of Sulaco; and both appear in the second chapter, in which a closer view of the respective cities is given both by Masterman and by Conrad.

Speculations about the number of facts from Masterman which are to be found in *Nostromo*, either close to the original form or with some alterations, may certainly be carried too far. The ironic use of pompous or derisive expressions like 'gefe supremo', 'el gran bestia', 'macacco', is not necessarily drawn from Masterman, nor is his book the only source for some of the names in *Nostromo*, like Guzman or Ignazio. But the Monsterist plotters in Sulaco, Fuentes and Gamacho, with their respective characters, can remind one of Francia and Vegros, the joint rulers of Paraguay earlier in the nineteenth century, whose portraits Masterman also sketches.¹ The name of Conrad's imaginary 'Occidental Republic' was obviously coined after the name Oriental Republic, formerly used for Uruguay, with which Conrad was certainly familiar before reading about the Paraguayan war. The special interest taken by the United States in the affairs of Sulaco is also understandable without reference to numerous passages in Masterman's book concerning the interest of the U.S.A. in Paraguay.

A reading of Masterman's book with an eye on *Nostromo* makes one aware of one aspect of Conrad's creative art. We are certainly entitled to accept his own statements about facts and people which first incited him to write *Nostromo*. His own rather hazy recollection of the South American land and people provided the main background for his writing, and it seems obvious that a close contact with R. B. Cunninghame Graham, about which sufficient records are extant, helped him to refresh his memory and complete it with what he could learn about his friend's experiences. Conrad took Masterman's book as supplementary reading, which, however, turned out to be of first-rate importance. It provided him with the ideas for many details, which appear all through the book, including practically all the important names, one of the most striking scenes, and some of the crucial events in the course of the plot, apart from its contribution to the brazen realism of the Costaguana atmosphere. But the elusive omnipresent symbolic pattern, and the magnificent framework of geographical, social, and political facts, with the constant reference to the 'material interests' underlying them, are exclusively products of Conrad's unique genius. In building up his conception of the history of Sulaco before the starting-point of the narrative, and also in his indications of future prospects, Conrad disclosed a profound insight into the manifold problems inseparable from the course of progress in a backward country. His critical attitude, which enabled him to reveal so many essential truths, may be

¹ Cf. Masterman, p. 29 and *Nostromo*, pp. 321-2.

contrasted with Masterman's cheerful certainty that, as regards 'the republics of the Plate, . . . aliens . . . advance them in spite of themselves'.¹

One incident which does not appear in *Nostromo* may be in a particular way responsible for the evocation of all the manifold echoes from Masterman's book. It is the story of Mischkoffsky, a Polish refugee, in charge of laying Paraguayan torpedoes in the river. One morning his men deserted 'and they gave themselves up to the Brazilians torpedo and all. The engineer, when he came back, searched in vain for the missing canoe, and then, returning to Humaità, reported what had happened. He was at once arrested, charged with having connived at the desertion, put in double irons, afterwards reduced to the ranks—he had held the rank of captain—was sent to the front, and soon afterwards killed'.²

Conrad, as an *émigré* and Polish patriot who adopted another country and wrote in a foreign language, was throughout his life particularly responsive to everything connected with his own people. Is it not very probable that the Mischkoffsky incident increased his awareness of all the latent possibilities Masterman's book could offer?

¹ Masterman, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

NOTE

THE NOMENCLATURE OF *KING LEAR*

WITHOUT disturbing the traditional picture of the sources of *King Lear*, it may still be possible to add a detail or two. We may, for instance, ask why in the Gloucester sub-plot the two chief characters, Edgar and Edmund, and also the steward Oswald, should have Anglo-Saxon names, while all the characters in the main plot have British names derived ultimately from Geoffrey of Monmouth. The acknowledged source of the sub-plot, the *Arcadia*, is no help, since the brothers there have the romance names of Leonatus and Plexirtus. I wish to suggest that these names were taken, because of their etymological significance, from Camden's *Remaines*, entered in the Stationers' Register on 10 November 1604 and published in 1605. This book was suggested as a secondary source of the *Lear* story (as of the belly fable in *Coriolanus*), and as the origin of the Fool's jest about a shelled peascod many years ago;¹ but it may repay a little more examination. In Camden's glossary of Saxon names we find (p. 65): 'OSVOLD, *Ger.* House-ruler or Steward: for *Wold* in old English and high Dutch, is a Ruler . . .'. Where else should Shakespeare have learnt that Oswald meant 'steward'? Just conceivably, if we are liberal in our dating, from Verstegan's (or Rowlands's) *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities*, published at Antwerp in 1605, which glosses Oswald in much the same way as Camden—'a ruler or menager of the affaires of the hows' (p. 266)—though without using the word 'steward'. But the object of Verstegan's book was precisely to disentangle the confusion between British and Saxon antiquity which was common in the age and which is typically exhibited by *King Lear* itself.² Shakespeare is therefore the less likely to have read it. What of the other names? Camden glosses 'Edgar' as follows (p. 50):

EADGAR, *Sax.* for *Eadig-ar*, Happy, or blessed honor, or power, for I find it interpreted in an old history *Fælix potestas* . . . and *Eadig*, (for the which *Ead* was vsed in composition,) is the word in the 6. of saint *Math.* in the English-Saxon testament, so often iterated, for *Blessed* in the Beatitudes. . . . *Ear*, or *Ar*, signifie(s) *Honor*. . . .

¹ See W. Perrett, *The Story of King Lear from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Shakespeare* (*Palaestra*, xxv, 1904), p. 121 ff.: K. Muir, in the Arden edition of the play (1952, p. xxxvi n.) considers that Perrett's points constitute the 'only . . . evidence' that Shakespeare used Camden, but he appears not to have carried the search further than the main story itself. Line numbers refer to this edition.

² See T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, 1950).

If we accept for Edgar the half-saintly significance which many critics have found in him, as peacemaker and the fugitive champion of natural love, then Camden's gloss, 'blessed honor', is apt enough. The gloss on 'Edmund' (the next name in Camden's list) does not correspond so neatly (p. 50):

EDMVND, Sax. for *Eadmund*, Happy, or blessed, peace: Our Lawyers yet doe acknowledge *Mund* for *Peace* in their word *Mundbrech*, for breach of *Peace*. . . .

Yet there is evidence of Shakespeare's carelessness in reading, and it is possible that he may have loosely associated the idea of violence, of 'mundbrech', with the name Edmund, and so have regarded it as suitable for the character of the 'universal wolf'.¹ This notion is strengthened by the fact that the two names of Edgar and Edmund, as names of Anglo-Saxon kings, appear elsewhere in the *Remaines*, and the characters attached to them are very pertinent to those of the play. Camden sums it all up in these words (p. 90): 'King *Eadgar* was called the Peaceable. . . king *Edmund* for his Valour, *Iron-side*.' If a reference of this kind was at the back of Shakespeare's mind, it might also help to explain Albany's curious remark addressed to Edgar (v. iii. 175):

Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness. . . .

There is no other hint in the play that Edgar is 'royal' in any sense.

The glosses in Verstegan are less suggestive (pp. 252-3). 'Edgar' is derived from 'oath' and 'guard', and means '*a keeper of his othe* or faithfull conuenant', which is near to the Shakespearian significance, but without the overtones of saintliness suggested by Camden. The derivation of 'Edmund' is quite beside the point. It is said to come from 'oath' and 'mouth', and to mean '*a mouth of troth-keeping* or loyaltie'.

If Shakespeare read Camden, he may have been sent to another source where the names of Edgar, Edmund, and Oswald appear in close proximity: Hakluyt, whom Camden praises at p. 170.² The early pages of Hakluyt contain much material on the early history of Britain: for instance (p. 6) a long account, taken from Florence of Worcester and others, of Edgar as 'Pacifcus'. Edgar is seen, not only as a great king, but as a saintly, half-divine figure who 'had in his minde about six hundred yeeres past, the representation of . . . the . . . Idea . . . of the whole and onely one mysticall citie universall' under the protection of British peace and justice. (Later

¹ To see this significance in the name Edmund does not, of course, prevent us from agreeing with K. Muir (*R.E.S.*, N.S. ii (1951), 5) that it was suggested also by Harsnett's book.

² Edition of 1598-9.

—pp. 202 ff.—there is an extract from the *Libell of English Policie* which stresses his role of protector of the poor.) Not far from this account of the saintliness of Edgar is another passage (p. 9) briefly describing a murder plot in which Edmund Ironsides and his son Edmund, and yet another Edgar, are mentioned. Hard by appears the name Oswald, as one of Edgar's bishops (p. 8). The names of various earls of Kent and Gloster are also to be found in the early pages of Hakluyt and in Camden. Two anecdotes of men holding these titles told by Camden may conceivably have had their effect on Shakespeare: one (p. 187) of Godwin, Earl of Kent, remarking, even though in jest, 'Now one brother did helpe another', and another (p. 196) of 'Robert Earle of Gloucester base sonne to king Henry the first, the onely martiall man of England in his age'. It is not necessary to suppose that Shakespeare bore all these things in mind when writing *King Lear*, but this grouping of the names Edgar, Edmund, Oswald, Kent and Gloster, both in Camden and in Hakluyt, may have suggested to him ways of filling in the bare outline of a sub-plot which he found in the *Arcadia*.

There is one more name to be accounted for: the alias of Caius, assumed by the exiled Kent. Shakespeare used the name elsewhere, and he had no need to go to Camden for it; but it is there, in a laconic lapidary style suited to the plain blunt Kent (second p. 52):

Doctor *Caius* a learned Phisition of Cambridge, and a co-founder of *Gunwell* and *Caius* colledge, hath onely on his monument there: FVI CAIVS.

This is almost Kent's 'I am the very man' (v. iii. 286). If, as is likely enough, Shakespeare used for the catalogue of dogs in *Macbeth*, and perhaps for some passages in *King Lear*, Caius's pamphlet *Of English Dogs*, translated by Abraham Fleming in 1576, that is one more reason why the name should recur to his mind.

Without going over the ground already covered by Perrett, it is necessary to recall that these scattered memories of personal names are not the only evidence for a connexion between the *Remaines* and *King Lear*. The Lear story itself occurs in the book (p. 183) with the peculiarity that it is told not of Lear, but of 'Ina', king of Wessex. Perrett suggests that this is a 'small literary fraud' on Camden's part, and that he was in fact basing himself on Polydore Virgil. Yet it may have been this transference from a British to a Saxon setting which encouraged Shakespeare to combine British and Saxon names in the play. There are other details too which may have aided Shakespeare's imagination: the two following anecdotes, for instance, may have supplied some details for Goneril and Regan:

King *Henry* the second grievously molested by the disobedience of his four sonnes, who entred into actual rebellion against him, caused to be painted in

his great Chamber at his pallace in *Winchester*, an Eagle with foure yong chickens, whereof three pecked and scratched him, the fourth picked at his eyes . . . he said to one demanding his meaning, That they were his sonnes which did so pecke him, and that *Iohn* the yongest whome he loved best, practised his death more busily than the rest (p. 160).

One *Fulke* a Frenchman . . . tolde this king *Richard* that he kept with him three daughters, that would procure him the wrath of God, if he did not shortly ridde himself of them. *Why hypocrite* (quoth the king) *all the worlde knoweth that I never hadde childe, Yea* (saide *Fulke*) *you have as I said, three; and their names are Pride, Covetousness, and Lechery. (Is it so* (saide the king) *you shal see me presently bestow them . . .* (p. 200)...

The first of these anecdotes comes from a section on Impresas, in which we know Shakespeare was professionally interested; and from the same section comes this:

Out of Philosophie likewise an other, to notifie his greatest impeachment, drew this principle, *EX NIHILO NIHIL*: and inscribed it bend-wise, with his Armes in a bare shield (p. 167).

This, of course, recalls Lear's bitter philosopher's quip to Cordelia in the opening scene, 'Nothing will come of nothing: speak again' (l. 90). For the jests of the Fool, which depend so much on traditional speech, it is perhaps not wise to seek a specific source, but it may be noted that Camden has reference to Merlin's prophecies and the 'marring of malt with water' (pp. 197, 235, cf. the prophecy at III. iii. 82), and to a jest of Heywood's about fools and wise men changing coats (p. 234). But a memory of Camden is more likely in Lear's description of the riches of his kingdom at the beginning of the play:

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shady forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads
We make thee lady. . . . (l. 63)

This may be compared with the lyrical description of Britain which opens Camden's book (p. 1).

For water, it is walled and garded with the Ocean . . . and watered with pleasant fishfull and navigable rivers . . . abundant in pasture . . . (for it hath more parkes than all *Europe* besides), plentifully wooded. . . .¹

It is also possible that Shakespeare may have remembered the Latin epigram on Britain quoted by Camden (p. 6), ironically inverting for tragic

¹ Such praise, of course, is part of the standard description of Britain, and not confined to Camden: cf. Lambarde, *Perambulation of Kent* (1576), pp. 7-8; Geoffrey of Monmouth, ch. ii; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. i.

purposes every one of its points of praise: peace, clement skies, the fair division of dowries, nature as kindly parent, and the harmony of *luxus* and *usus*:

Anglia terra ferax, tibi pax secunda quietem,
 Multiplicem luxum merx opulenta dedit.
 Tu nimio nec stricta gelu, nec sydere fervens,
 Clementi cælo, temperieque places.
 Cum pareret Natura parens, varioque favore
 Divideret dotes omnibus vna locis: . . .
 Quicquid amat luxus, quicquid desiderat vsus,
 Ex te proveniet, vel aliunde tibi.

Lear's speech beginning 'O reason not the need. . .' (II. iv. 266) is almost a direct commentary on this ideal landscape of man and nature.

It appears, then, from these and other details which could be added to make up a cumulative effect, that the connexion between the *Remaines* and *King Lear* extends beyond the etymologies themselves. This is important, for if it were not so, there would perhaps be no need to go further in search of the names Edgar and Edmund than Holinshed, as was suggested by Malone.¹ But, although there is a good deal of material about both Edgar and Edmund, and also about Bishop Oswald, in Holinshed, it is scattered and apparently without special significance. The meanings of the names are not explained—notably, the aptness of the name Oswald for a steward is not mentioned—there is no connexion with the Lear story, and above all the two kings are not brought together in sharp contrast as peacemaker and warrior: all these things are in Camden, along with a number of auxiliary details which may have helped the Lear story. Shakespeare knew his Holinshed out of long familiarity; and there is no very good reason why he should have chosen the names Edgar and Edmund rather than any other pair of the many historical names which Holinshed could offer. Camden provides just such a reason.

If the argument here propounded is accepted, it has some bearing, though not a strong one, on the date of the play. If we insist that Shakespeare can only have known Camden's book in its published form, then the date of composition must be 1605 at the earliest. But those who hold to a date in 1604 can justifiably argue that Shakespeare's friendship for Jonson, and Jonson's for Camden, would make it quite possible for him to have seen the book before publication.

S. MUSGROVE

¹ See Shakespeare, *Plays and Poems*, 3rd variorum edn. (London), 1821), x. 3.

REVIEWS

The English Interrogative Pronouns. A study of their syntactic history.

By GÖRAN KARLBERG. Pp. 353 (Gothenburg Studies in English 3). Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1954. Kr. 18.

It is well known that the history of the English pronouns is a complicated one and difficult to unfold, and this is especially true of the indefinite and interrogative pronouns. Of the latter we now have, in this detailed syntactical study by the late and much lamented Göran Karlberg, an admirably full and well-documented account which will be of prime importance in future syntheses of the history of English. It is a credit to both author and printer that there is almost complete accuracy despite the extensive use of diplomatically spelt quotations. There has been scholarly and valuable use of source-material and parallel versions, and indeed Dr. Karlberg has to a large extent relied, for his analysis of pronoun usage in early English, upon texts which are closely based upon extant Latin sources. Nor, for his purposes in this study, is such reliance excessive. The material surveyed for the study is impressively extensive: the corpus of OE. poetry and a good proportion of the prose, considered by dialects; almost the entire body of better-known ME. works, considered by both dialect and date; the main writers of the late fifteenth and of the sixteenth centuries, and a smaller selection down to about 1800; and finally, a dozen present-day works of various kinds. The main emphasis is thus put on the early period, and this is justified by the fact that it was especially in these centuries that the modern usage of the pronouns became established.

For the basic essentials of usage and distribution of forms, Karlberg's analysis and presentation are to be confidently relied upon. It remains to draw the attention of readers wishing to use his work to the limitations which the author has rightly or wrongly imposed on his study, and to its drawbacks generally.

Scottish English is expressly excluded from the survey, and so (surely with less justification) is consideration of the pronoun *whether*. No attempt is made 'to classify the material according to direct questions and "indirect questions"; poetry, prose, etc.; or social status' (p. 10). Whether these decisions were made on the basis of impression or following an unproductive pilot survey we are not told. Nor are we told why the author did not provide an index. There are excellent lists of the source-books, by which one can readily get fuller information on the origin of any cited passage or find whether a particular work has been used as a source of material. But without a subject-index it is not easy to find one's way to a particular topic in this large book; the section-headings are inadequate as a guide, and the problem is aggravated by the use in these headings of unfamiliar terms, definitions of which are likewise difficult to track down.

The analysis and classification are generally helpful and often illuminating (note, for instance, the table showing the relationship of cognitive and relative forms, with their subsidiaries, p. 36), but occasionally the presentation is

ineffectual. Too often we have an apparently inconsequential list of usages, linked by 'also' ('*what* can also refer . . .'; '*which* also occurs . . .'), with any intended significance of order disastrously obscured. It is difficult to see, too, why there should be a special brief chapter on 'Concatenations' (pp. 294-7), especially in view of the separate treatment that these phenomena receive in the main body of the book (for example, pp. 90 f., 95 f., 100 f.). Many grammarians may well distrust the excessively mentalistic approach to grammatical categories and disapprove of the too frequent failure to distinguish these from logical categories: 'there is no noun with which it can be felt to be adjectivally connected'; '[Sweet] feels *what* . . . rather to be associated with the interrogatives'; 'To Erdmann . . . the desire for information is already expressed by the verb'. The latter examples illustrate in addition a characteristic thesis-like quality of the book; the opinions of other grammarians are constantly being cited *in extenso*, and while this displays assiduous study on the author's part and is occasionally also helpful, one could in general wish for a less obtrusive recognition of previous work. Previous work should receive attention when it is germane to a constructive argument or when it is being significantly modified by the writer. In the present case, one often finds neither justification, and the presentation of scarcely relevant nineteenth-century views tends to draw attention to the disappointing evidence of a lack of acquaintance with more recent thought; thus a prosodic approach might have helped in analysing the *which of you* and *which, of all these types* (pp. 77, 80, 82).

RANDOLPH QUIRK

The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries. By R. R. BOLGAR. Pp. viii + 592. Cambridge: University Press, 1954. 45s. net.

As this is a book which will be found indispensable by the historian of English literature, it would seem that the most useful service of the reviewer will be to give some indication of the volume's scope and character. This he can do largely in the words of the author himself. 'In the pages that follow', he says in his Introduction (p. 2), 'we shall consider the fortunes of the Graeco-Roman heritage from the beginning of the Dark Ages to the close of the sixteenth century.' Beyond that date he does not carry the story, because he thinks that the character of classical studies then began to change, and their influence on literature to count for less. In spite of difficulties he has found it possible 'to present the material to hand in a more or less straightforward order, except that a separate chapter has had to be included on Byzantium, which was at all times culturally distinct from the West, and the several Western countries have had to be separately discussed in connexion with the Renaissance' (p. 11). In nine chapters the author discusses (1) 'The Background', (2) 'The Greek East', (3) 'The Carolingian Age', (4) 'The Pre-scholastic Age', (5) 'The Scholastic Age', (6) 'Collapse and New Beginnings', (7) 'The High Renaissance', (8) 'The End of the Renaissance and the Appearance of New Patterns in Classical Education and Scholarship', (9) 'Education and the Classical Heritage'. Added to these chapters are two valuable and interesting Appendixes, one on 'Greek Manuscripts in Italy during

the Fifteenth Century', the other on 'The Translations of Greek and Roman Classical Authors before 1600'. As for the Index, it is everything a scholar could desire.

That will give some idea of the range and variety of matters discussed in this notable volume. It is the business of a critic to criticize, and I shall have some criticisms to offer for what they are worth. But I should like to make it clear at the outset that my admiration for so much learning and acumen is untouched by the objections, doubts, and queries which have occurred to me.

The author writes from the standpoint of an historian of education and scholarship, not of literature as such; and his work must be judged accordingly. The reader is not to expect from him, what he expressly disclaims, a sustained attempt to show how modern have been influenced by ancient writers in the form and aesthetic quality of their writing. This Dr. Bolgar leaves to other scholars, such as Gilbert Highet, whose brilliant study *The Classical Tradition* offers a stimulating commentary on the literature involved. But whereas Professor Highet's book, though even longer than Dr. Bolgar's, attempts no more than an outline of his vast subject, Bolgar follows a different method, describing in concentrated detail the material under his hand—material capable of forming the basis on which many volumes of literary criticisms may come to be written. That is why it is important for this journal to give his book more attention than its title might appear to claim from ordinary students of English literature. Not that Dr. Bolgar is thinking particularly of them. 'This book', he says (p. 2), 'has been written in the hope that it may contribute, within the narrow boundaries of its specialised approach, to the work of revaluation which all these changes have rendered necessary.' More simply, he would like to see classical studies restored to a position not too far below that which they used to hold in our educational system. It is impossible for me not to sympathize with that desire, but I confess that I can see almost no hope of its fulfilment if the case is rested, as Dr. Bolgar would apparently rest it, on utilitarian grounds. The 'cultural values' of the ancient literatures are, I wholly agree, inestimable. But the modern world cannot be expected to prefer them to its own. If Latin and Greek are to be preserved, it must (as no doubt it will) be for their literary virtues mainly or alone.

Bolgar writes, so far as I am competent to judge, particularly well on the Middle (including the Dark) Ages. In this field he is clearly a master. His treatment of the Renaissance hardly inspires the same confidence. May I say this? The medievalists are now so formidably equipped and have so good a case that for some time past the balance has been perhaps tilted a little in their favour. Of course everyone must resent the sort of language which the Renaissance scholars—and not only the scholars—permitted themselves to use about their medieval predecessors, who were often better men than themselves. Yet it remains true that at the Renaissance there did come into literature something new and very precious—a critical appreciation of 'classical' form and style. The Middle Ages failed in that; what they looked for in the ancient classics was instruction, and that was what they found. How the style of Virgil differed from that of Horace, the style of Cicero from that of Tacitus, they hardly asked

themselves, perhaps they hardly saw. But these differences were just what chiefly and often passionately engaged the interest of the Renaissance men. We must allow for this new enthusiasm if we are to understand such things as the *Pléiade* or even *Paradise Lost*. It is the same in prose. Thus Erasmus was the means of reintroducing into European literature the use of irony as a pervading element in prose, and it is as certain as anything of the kind can be that he learned how to do this from his delighted study of Lucian, his master and model, in the *Colloquies* and the *Encomium Moriae*. Yet this fact, so interesting and even important to the historian of literature, is not mentioned by Dr. Bolgar. True, he is not writing a history of literature as such; yet the history of literary influences he does regard as part of his theme.

A writer of Bolgar's quality does not commit errors in scholarship; but he cannot know everything. Oddly enough one of the things he does not know is how and where scholarship originated. He suggests that it came into existence to meet the practical requirements of the Greek schoolmaster. But the suggestion is quite unnecessary, or rather it is quite mistaken. Scholarship began in the Lyceum under the direction of Aristotle himself, who was certainly not thinking of the schools. Grammar, literary criticism, literary research were all put on a scientific basis first by Aristotle; the Pergamene and Alexandrian scholars merely carried on his work. Again, the arguing of an imaginary lawsuit *pro* and *con* before a master of the subject was, I suppose, the principal instrument of legal education throughout antiquity. Yet in discussing the work of the great medieval lawyer Bulgarus the author says that the *quaestio disputata*, which was evidently a legal argument of this kind, appears to have been the invention of Bulgarus. Is it not much more likely that he was continuing or reviving a practice which had never died out in Italy?

It is inevitable that in a book containing an almost infinite series of statements the reader will occasionally find himself doubting or dissenting. Merely, however, to mention points of disagreement without discussing them is hardly a fair way of reviewing, while to discuss them here would take too long, involving as most of them do the interpretation of ancient thought, which is not the special business of this journal. But in matters of language and literature too I feel that some of Dr. Bolgar's statements, even in a book of so much compression that a certain amount of dogmatism is inevitable, are too absolute. Is it, for instance, true that we can form 'a clear picture' (p. 9) of the classical reading of Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare? Why is it then that scholars are so much at variance on just that point? Who can tell us when they are quoting at first or second hand? About Shakespeare he says elsewhere that it is a matter of small importance how much Latin he knew. No doubt that is true, but it is not a matter of small importance how far he was influenced by the classical tradition, as conveyed to him for instance from Plutarch. Again, he says (p. 16): 'We know that these epics—the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—were composed originally to amuse the great men of the post-tribal period.' But who *knows* any such thing? In another place (p. 59) he says that the Byzantines knew no Latin. Yet Latin was for long the 'official' language of the Byzantine court, and when the great *corpus juris civilis* of Justinian was published it was in Latin. It follows that Byzantine lawyers—a

very important body in Constantinople—would find it necessary to learn some Latin. That they did so is confirmed by a legal instrument, dated as late as 1045, which requires the head of a newly founded law-school to know Latin as well as Greek. Nevertheless, what Dr. Bolgar says if not absolutely is roughly true, and Byzantine ignorance of the Latin language and literature is, like medieval ignorance of the Greek, a fact of endless significance and importance for the history of Western culture.

The book is written in an energetic, often picturesque, sometimes eloquent style. I feel bound, however, to give my opinion that it is not the best of styles for a work of scholarship. If this be a true judgement—and I must leave the decision to other scholars—it is a matter of real importance, because clever and ambitious students will try to write like this brilliant teacher. Having said so much, I am perhaps bound to quote some examples of what I deprecate. Dr. Bolgar writes of the old classical discipline that it now 'trembles on the edge of the melting-pot' (p. 2). He says (p. 193): 'All these different attitudes of favour and opposition and compromise have their pendant in an educational system whose character was singularly elastic. The complex motivations of twelfth century society were reflected in the cathedral schools which formed the focus of that system. . . .' 'The difficulties that engaged their attention and could mobilise the vigour of their feelings were present to their consciousness in the wider involvement of a social context' (p. 48). What can have induced the writer to bury his sense under such an accumulation of dead or dying metaphors? In particular, as it seems to me, the metaphors of 'root' and 'pattern' are by Dr. Bolgar immensely overworked. Yet I must not give a false impression. It is just because he writes in general so well that I cannot but regret these occasional lapses into jargon.

It should be added that the volume is admirably produced and printed, the *errata* in such a multiplicity of details remarkably few. Those I have noted or suspected—for without the author's sources I cannot always be sure where the mistake began—are not due to the author himself. I can only ask him if *Phrynichus* in p. 23 (cf. 63 and 84) should not be *Phrynichus*; *praeradias* in 213 *praeradiat*; *veruta*, *versuta*; *adulendum*, *adulandum*; *violentes*, *violentos* (all in 415); *mortibus* in 397 *moribus*; *affligentem* in 414 *affigentem*; *doctrinae* in 432 *doctrina*; *Memorativo* in 433 *Memorativa*; *Grammatici* in 450 *Grammatico*; *preferabat* in 417 *preferebat*; *Theodolus* in 423 *Theodulus*; *insecalibus* in 465 *insecabilibus*; *Nichomachean* in 467 *Nicomachean* (important commas are omitted in this page); *Ilia* in 471 *Ilio*; *Sophistorum* in 482 *Sophistarum*; *Bartolommo* 485 *Bartolommeo*; *de Resp.* in 494 and 495 *de Rep.*; *Androtium* 513 *Androtionem*; *Catalinam* 529 *Catilinam*; *Stratagemata* 529 *Strategemata*; *Militaris* 536 *Militari*. Was it not Basil rather than Chrysostom that was the 'favourite pupil' of Libanius? (p. 491).

I do not suppose that Bolgar has missed any of these *errata*, if *errata* they all are; they will be corrected in the next printing. Most of them occur in the Notes, for the learning of which no praise can be too high. Certainly they have taught the reviewer a great deal, and he would like to end on this note of gratitude.

J. A. K. THOMSON

Die Tragödie vor Shakespeare. Ihre Entwicklung im Spiegel der dramatischen Rede. By WOLFGANG CLEMEN. Pp. 270. Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1955. DM.15.

This is in many ways an admirable book. It exhibits a rare combination of erudition, acute perceptions, and unfailing good sense. The author has set himself the task of throwing light on the development of pre-Shakespearian tragedy, from *Gorboduc* to *Edward II*, by means of a detailed analysis of the nature and function of the set speech ('Rede') in a group of selected plays. (The German word 'Rede', the key-word of the book, is unluckily untranslatable, since it comprises among other meanings those of 'oration', 'monologue', and 'speech'.) This involves a discussion not only of the style and structure of a chosen speech, but also of its dramatic function, its integration in the plot, as well as its relation to the character of the speaker, the themes of the play, and the immediate situation in which it occurs. This approach, when pursued with Professor Clemen's discrimination and skill, proves a very fruitful one; for it enables him to be sufficiently detailed in his analyses to get beyond the commonplaces and generalities of most histories of literature and yet, by confining his discussion to a single dramatic element, to cover enough ground to make manifest a clear line of development in pre-Shakespearian tragedy. According to the author, this line leads, very broadly speaking, from dramatic speech which is unrelated to character, situation, and plot, and serves largely as a didactic vehicle, to a form of speech which is closely related to these elements and has become dramatic and individualized.

After a preliminary discussion of the set speech in European Renaissance drama and contemporary literary theory, Dr. Clemen describes the various basic types of such speeches, without ever falling into the mere mechanical listing and classifying so common in this kind of work. He then proceeds to an analysis of individual plays, dealing first with the academic drama, rooted in Senecan tragedy, existing largely in and through its set speeches and eschewing action; and next with its opposites, plays in the popular dramatic tradition, where crowded action is central and set speeches are avoided. It is the author's belief that from the marriage of these two opposing traditions the great Elizabethan drama was born, and that Shakespeare could never have written his tragedies if both traditions had not been securely established when he began his dramatic career.

Shakespeare hätte seine einzigartige Leistung: die Verschmelzung des bewegten, ereignisreichen Handlungsdrasmas mit der Tradition der auf der Mächtigkeit des Wortes, der 'Beredsamkeit' ruhenden rhetorischen Tragödie nicht vollbringen können, wenn nicht auf dem elisabethanischen Theater die Helden jahrzehntelang schon sich darin geübt hätten, ein Höchstmass an Wollen, Fühlen, Denken in der gesteigerten Sprache der Rede zum Ausdruck zu bringen. (p. 21)

Dr. Clemen makes full allowance for the uniqueness of Shakespeare's genius but insists upon a recognition of the dramatic traditions without which it would have had to take a different course. In the final section of the book the author takes a single type of speech, the conventional lament, and, after discussing its various

topoi, analyses in detail its use in many of the plays dealt with in preceding sections.

Dr. Clemen is not afraid of making bold generalizations. The book is full of them, and, while many are illuminating and compel immediate assent, others raise disagreement or doubts. His remark, for instance, that what we mean today by 'inner tragedy' was unknown to the Elizabethans before Shakespeare, except for some beginnings in Marlowe (p. 35), needs qualification and development, in view of such plays as *The Troublesome Reign* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III*. Renaissance interpretations of the Aristotelian catharsis were far more varied than is suggested on pp. 34-35, but here the wording may be at fault.

The book is lucidly, incisively, and sensitively written. Only very occasionally have the endings of adjectives and nouns gone astray (e.g. on p. 258, l. 19). Two more quotations may serve to illustrate the book's high quality of style and critical insight:

Die Fortissimo-Tonstärke der Tamburlaine-Reden zurückzuschrauben, wäre in jedem anderen Zeitalter leichter gewesen. Shakespeares grosse Leistung muss vor diesem Hintergrund gesehen werden. Denn obwohl sich bald nach dem Bekanntwerden des Tamburlaine auch Parodien dieses Sprachbombastes einstellten, so war er doch der Erste, der Abstufungen brachte, der Leises und Verborgenes gestaltete, der um Zwischentöne und Nuancen wusste. (p. 113)

And, distinguishing between 'tragi-comedy' in the work of Shakespeare and Greene:

Shakespeares Kunst, tragische Verwicklungen, die nicht zur letzten Konsequenz geführt werden, mit allverstehender Güte und tiefsinniger Heiterkeit zu überglänzen, ist etwas anderes als Greenes Ausweichen vor der Darstellung jeder echt empfundenen tragischen Regung, etwas anderes als sein Nicht-zu-Ende Führen der psychologischen Konflikte. (pp. 166-7)

It is in such distinctions, so happily expressed—and there are many more of the same quality—that the value of this book above all lies.

The proof-reading has been careful until the last part, where a number of misprints have crept in (p. 189, n. 4, 'Cinthio Giraldis'; p. 201, l. 25, 'Furtuna'; p. 206, l. 24, 'Almence'; p. 234, l. 30, 'woes?'; p. 248, l. 14, 'Techeleles'; p. 249, last line, 'ale things'; p. 254, l. 17, 'Fage').

In his Conclusion Dr. Clemen discusses the difficulties of applying to Shakespeare the analytical methods which have been adopted in this book, and outlines the more organic and comprehensive approach that would be needed. He ends with a hint that such a work is already projected. There is no one better fitted to undertake it. In the meantime it is to be hoped that the book under review will soon be made available to readers in this country in a competent English translation.

ERNEST SCHANZER

The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker. Edited by FREDSON BOWERS. Vol. II. Pp. vii+592. Cambridge: University Press, 1955. 40s. net.

The present volume contains five plays and a pageant: 1 and 2 *The Honest Whore*, 1604 and 1630; *The Magnificent Entertainment* of James I on his passage through London, 1604; *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho*, 1607 (with Webster); and *The Whore of Babylon*, also 1607.

There is a curious bibliographical similarity between the two pieces printed in 1604, though they had different publishers. In both the first edition was divided for printing between two houses, and so was the second, which was produced in part from standing type: in both editions of both pieces corrections were made in course of printing, and in both the second edition contains alterations that may reasonably be attributed to the author. In reprinting *The Honest Whore* the title was changed to *The Converted Courtesan*; but the original title was restored in a third edition, which was made up from sheets of the earlier two with some alterations. Investigation is hampered by the fact that the second edition only survives in two imperfect copies, neither of which has a title-page, and the third in a single copy only, which it is impossible to be certain is in its original state. The division of the copy between several printers was presumably for rapidity of production: the partial use of standing type in the reprints was presumably an attempt to circumvent in some measure restrictions on the size of editions. Professor Bowers believes that this device was planned from the beginning when the distribution of copy was made—at least in the case of the *Entertainment*. But more interesting problems remain. How far was the author himself responsible, first for the press variants in the original editions, and later for the alterations in the reprints? Was it he who changed the title of the play? The editor's arguments tend to restrict Dekker's responsibility. It is disappointing, however, that his meticulous and lengthy analysis of the evidence leads to no very firm conclusions. The painful distinguishing of possibilities and weighing of rival conjectures issue rather in a fog of uncertainty than any clear-cut hypothesis of a kind to supply a satisfactory basis for editorial procedure.

Both parts of *The Honest Whore* seem likely to have been printed from foul papers: Dekker also doubtless provided the copy for *The Magnificent Entertainment*, but since the editor questions his responsibility for the translations of the Latin speeches added in the second edition, these may have had a different source. *Westward Ho* is again supposed to have been printed from foul papers, though one would have expected the break-up of the Children of Paul's the same year to have released the prompt-book for press, as it is agreed may have happened in the case of *Northward Ho*. The copy for *The Whore of Babylon* is also assumed to have been a manuscript of Dekker's, but the question of its more precise nature is complicated on the one hand by a suspicion that the play may be a revision of *Truth's Supplication to Candlelight*, for which the Admiral's men were making payments to Dekker early in 1600, and on the other by cryptic allusions in the preface to the mutilation of the piece at the hands of their successors, the Prince's men. The editor, while expressing no opinion on the relation, if any, between the two plays, concludes that the printed version probably represents a revision and expansion of that submitted for performance.

The reader of Mr. Bowers's introductions to the several pieces may get the impression that speculation is sometimes wasted on problems for the solution of which no sufficient grounds of evidence exist. In 1 *Honest Whore*, and again in the *Entertainment*, a great deal of space is devoted to conjecture as to what alterations should be assigned to Dekker, for while the editor feels compelled to accept all changes made by the author, he holds himself free to treat others on their merits, as he would any proposed emendations. This is sound editorial practice. But, after all, it is only on internal grounds that some alterations are accepted as coming from the author; and a sceptical critic might argue that here is a distinction without a difference, and that in all cases what the editor does, and all he can do, is to accept those changes that commend themselves to his judgement and reject those that do not. I do not say that the critic would be right, but I think he might be rather difficult to answer.

Moreover, in spite of the elaboration of distinction and hypothesis, obvious possibilities are sometimes overlooked. A curious feature of the first quarto of 1 *The Honest Whore* is the occasional appearance of scene-numbers, vii-ix and xiii, in what are now Acts III and IV. In a footnote on p. 5 the editor argues that this must have 'a mechanical reason, not a literary significance'. Obviously the numbering was in the copy: the editor assumes that it ran throughout the copy, in which case other numbers must, of course, have been omitted by the printer. But the assumption is gratuitous. Dekker and Middleton—for according to Henslowe the play was a joint production—must have worked on a detailed plot or scenario. Suppose that in this the scenes were continuously numbered, which is likely enough, and that in writing his scenes one author retained this numbering and the other did not, which is at least conceivable; then the presence of numbers would indicate a change of author. This may or may not be a likely explanation, but it should have been considered before denying the possibility of 'literary significance'.

Or take a much more serious instance in connexion with another play. In 1605, two years before its eventual publication, *Westward Ho* was entered to Henry Rockett 'provided that he get further authoritie before yt be printed'. The editor assumes that the authority demanded was that of the Children of Paul's, who owned the play; and he proceeds to speculate whether 'the proprietors had got wind of Rockett's publication plans and had protested' or whether 'the warden suspected the company would object vigorously to publication', and further whether, on failing to obtain their sanction, Rockett sold his manuscript to the eventual publisher (whose identity is uncertain) or whether he returned it to the author. Such speculation is, however, idle in view of the improbability of the initial assumption. I cannot believe that the warden cared at all what the Paul's boys thought: Mr. Bowers has reverted to Pollard's long-discredited theory that the officers of the Stationers' Company normally inquired into the provenance of copies brought to them for registration. The authority demanded was doubtless, in this as in nearly all similar cases, that of a regular licenser of the press. It was about this time that Buc was assuming responsibility for licensing plays for printing as well as for acting. The natural inference from the entry is that Rockett was trying to get a manuscript of the play and meanwhile sought

to establish copyright in it. There was nothing unusual about entering a copy, at least conditionally, without producing a manuscript. When he failed the entry was cancelled.

W. W. GREG

Un malcontent élizabéthain: John Marston (1576-1634). By A. JOSÉ AXELRAD. Pp. vi+351. Paris: Didier, 1955. No price given.

Dr. Axelrad's work on Marston has been done with a scholarly thoroughness and a discriminating affection. He gives full descriptive accounts of the satires and the plays, considers their worth and their methods, and relates them to the literature of their time. Rightly he does not take the role of an advocate (except perhaps for a brief moment in his conclusion, when he puts Marston on Chapman's level): while finding much to interest him and us in the whole body of Marston's work, he makes strong claims only for *The Malcontent* and adds a modest plea on behalf of *Parasitaster*. Certainly his careful analyses will strengthen his readers' awareness of the character and worth of Marston's writing. Dr. Axelrad's manifest common sense, allied with his plain speaking and an attractive humour, preserves him from exaggeration and engages the reader's confidence.

So anxious is he not to make over-substantial claims that perhaps he is too severe on the *Antonio* plays. He apparently sees them as constituting a play planned from the beginning in two parts, though he notes the suddenness with which Piero's love for Maria is introduced in *Antonio's Revenge*. He might also have observed that, when the Induction to Part I was written, the author had apparently no intention of killing off Feliche before Part II began. If we see *Antonio and Mellida*, not as Part I of a two-part play, but as originally an independent work, it becomes a remarkable foreshadowing of *The Malcontent*—altogether less assured than that play, but already exhibiting a strange compound of bitterness and faint aspiration, where enmity and turpitude are viewed and judged by characters whose will to virtue goes along with a notable weakness in action. The 'happy' ending of the play is then a strange relenting of the gods, the expression of a wish and a dream: having written and contemplated the play, Marston decided to make the ending a mere respite from woe and to let fall a cascade of horrors on his characters in *Antonio's Revenge*. In *The Malcontent* the reinstatement of Altofronto is not so idyllic a matter as the reconciliation that marks the end of *Antonio and Mellida*, and therefore it does not call for reversal in a 'Second Part'. Dr. Axelrad sees that in *The Malcontent* we have not *un dénouement absolu*: we are left wondering how much the disguised Duke has learned, whether the corrupt court can be made habitable. We may dissent from Dr. Axelrad's wish for a less provisional ending, for it is surely in the nature of the deepest comedy that we are left thus uncertain whether the characters have found any measure of safety. It is a different matter if the dramatist gives us the impression that his dénouement raises no question for himself when indeed we think it should: Marston offends thus in *The Dutch Courtesan*, and we can have no quarrel with Dr. Axelrad's strictures on that play.

Probably the parts of the book that will prove most valuable are the chapters on the poems, on the influence of Seneca and Montaigne, on Marston's dramatic

technique, and on his language and style. In particular, we cannot read the chapter on technique without developing a new respect for the planning of Marston's better plays. When Dr. Axelrad turns to characterization, he seems to make an over-strong demand for the 'rounded' character. One of his chapters is called 'Les Caractères: Portraits ou Caricatures?', and the implied qualitative judgement becomes explicit in what follows. It would probably help in an evaluation of Marston's work if Jonson rather than Shakespeare were consistently in the critic's mind. Within the world of comic drama in which Marston and Jonson worked, there is little room for the kind of speculation in which Dr. Axelrad occasionally engages—as, for example, whether Crispinella and Rossaline were sexually experienced, or whether Tiberio in *Parasitaster* will make a good husband. One might indeed as well ask what kind of servant Face will henceforth be, or into what Cheltenham of the spirit Volpone's Celia will settle. Moreover, his complaint that Marston's characters are too simply drawn in black and white seems to overlook the cases of Malheureux and Pietro, and even that of Antonio, whose plunging into violence in *Antonio's Revenge* is perhaps presented more deliberately and critically than Dr. Axelrad assumes.

In a few matters of detail greater caution might have been exercised. Dr. Axelrad states categorically that the *Antonio* plays were acted in 1600-1, and that *Cambises* was written in 1569. He makes perhaps too simple a distinction between Kyd and Marston when he finds the deception of Pedringano merely amusing and that of Strotzo in *Antonio's Revenge* entirely different. He oddly asserts that the Elizabethan dumb-show was derived from Seneca, and his comment on the outmodedness of dumb-shows in Marston's time probably needs to be modified by distinguishing between the allegorical dumb-show (which did, indeed, die early) and the dumb-show as used in *Pericles* and by Webster for the sake of condensing and distancing the action displayed. In his account of Marston's use of song, he does not relate its frequency to the fact that his plays were written for the child actors. He too readily suggests that Marston was remembering his practice as a verse-satirist when he used couplets for sententious passages in the plays: as Dr. Axelrad points out, this is frequent in Shakespeare, and it was indeed a normal dramatic device. The list of borrowings from *The Spanish Tragedy* in the *Antonio* plays, given in an Appendix, does not carry much conviction.

But this is a book to be warmly welcomed. It provides ample justification for giving careful attention to Marston's work as a whole, and it should help to a clearer recognition that in *The Malcontent* he wrote a play of substantial merit.

CLIFFORD LEECH

Dobsons Drie Bobbes. Edited by E. A. HORSMAN. Pp. xxiv+110. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, for the University of Durham, 1955. 21s. net.

This is only the second time that this book has been reprinted since its appearance in 1607; but its place in the history of jest books, with which the title-page and the preface firmly link it, has been studied by Schulz and Professor F. P. Wilson. Mr. Horsman summarizes their findings in his introduction. Whilst it

is true that the book has a continuity quite unknown to the previous collections of jests grouped round the name of one hero, Mr. Horsman is more to the point when he states that in its treatment of jest-book material *Dobsons Drie Bobbes* ranges itself rather with the picaresque novel of Nashe and the novels of mundane middle-class interests of Deloney. For both Nashe and Deloney had already woven jest-book material into the fabric of their fictions. Mr. Horsman rightly points out that the stilted dialogue of *Dobsons Drie Bobbes* is inferior to Deloney's. Indeed the whole narrative is curiously flat and unhumorous. I would add that the characterization is weaker than either Nashe's or Deloney's. And this is disappointing in that the chief interest of the book lies in the fact that it portrays people who actually lived in Durham. It is perhaps going a little too far to say of *The Merry Conceited Jestes of George Peele* that 'little is historically identifiable beyond the mere name'; his most recent biographer, D. H. Horne, considers that some facts about Peele can be gleaned from the *Jests*. But this is nothing to put beside the discovery made by Mr. Colgrave and amplified by Mr. Horsman, that not only George Dobson himself but also most of the other characters in *Dobsons Drie Bobbes* can be traced in the Durham Cathedral Records between 1558 and 1568. The topography is similarly accurate, and the reader is enabled to follow Dobson's escapades by the aid of John Speed's map of Durham and a plan of the cathedral included at the end of the volume. It is most appropriate that this book should have been issued as one of the University of Durham Publications.

As Mr. Horsman notes in his introduction, besides colloquial and proverbial expressions there are a fairly large number of learned forms and meanings such as *dividence*, *occasionate*, *timor*, 'fear', and *evagation*, 'wandering'. He has therefore provided a useful glossary. Readers needing help with the above words might also have been glad to find *indigne*, 'unworthy', and *delict*, 'offence', in the glossary. *Indeleable* is presumably a variant of *indelible* ('indeleable respect', p. 69). Two words only have defeated the editor, 'a gowne of gray *cundosted* satin' (p. 39); and 'his sister with a broach, and the keeper of the Orchard with a *portigan*' (p. 53).

The text is reproduced from the copy in the Capell Collection, Trinity College, Cambridge, which Mr. Horsman has collated with microfilm of the only other recorded copy, that in the Folger Shakespeare Library. The editorial work appears to have been carefully done: 'kiked' (p. 62) must be a misprint for 'liked'; and the long s in 'his' (p. 10, line 13) is surely incorrect. J. R.

Donne's Poetry. Essays in Literary Analysis. By CLAY HUNT. Pp. xiii + 256. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1954. 30s. net.

Englische religiöse Lyrik des 17. Jahrhunderts. Studien zu Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan. By ARNO ESCH. Pp. xi + 225. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1955. DM.19.50.

Donne: Poèmes Choisis. Traduction, introduction et notes par PIERRE LEGOUIS. Pp. 224. Paris: Aubier, 1955. No price given.

Mr. Hunt declares that his book is not primarily intended for 'experts on Donne', but rather for 'that uncommon Common Reader who has a serious enough interest in poetry as demanding as Donne's to want to study it closely'. It would seem that nearly all the literary criticism of the past which we still find worth reading was also written for such an 'uncommon Common Reader'. What exactly does Mr. Hunt mean? And what does he understand by a book primarily intended for 'experts on Donne'? To me the description suggests a Ph.D. thesis—something to be read only as a matter of duty by its appointed examiners; something that ought, perhaps, never to have been written. Is there no mean between this and such a book as Mr. Hunt's? Not that his book is without merit, but it would have been very much better had he been able to persuade himself that what would be most likely to please those of his fellow scholars who were most worth pleasing would also be most likely to please both the common and the uncommon reader. As it is, he has produced a book that is a strange mixture of good and bad. There are many illuminating comments and interesting suggestions, but there is also an immense verbosity, a good deal of sheer vulgarity, and too much that resembles the bright remarks and rambling speculations of a thoroughly undisciplined mind.

His first chapter consists of 'explications' of four poems which he classifies as 'minor', namely 'The Indifferent', the Nineteenth Elegy ('Going to Bed'), 'Loves Alchymie', and 'The Blossome'. This is followed by three chapters each of which is devoted to the 'explication' of a single poem, 'The good-morrow,' 'The Canonization', and the 'Hymne to God my God'; and the rest of the book consists of a long essay entitled 'Some Conclusions'. The 'explication' is a critical genre which seems lately to have found much favour in the United States. The trouble with it is that it requires great tact and discrimination to keep it within bounds: too often it simply encourages a writer to go on as long as he can without stopping, setting down anything that any line, phrase, or word in a poem happens to suggest to him, and anything he is able in any way to connect with it. Thus paragraphs swell into chapters and chapters into books. The merits and defects of the method are well exemplified by Mr. Hunt. In his first chapter, where he has four poems to deal with, he contrives to say much that is worth saying; in the three following chapters he does not (for me, at any rate) illuminate the three poems he deals with in any way whatever. His first chapter is not without flashes of common sense. In his remarks on 'The Indifferent' he has some excellent things to say about Donne's occasionally ambiguous attitude to the literary conventions of his time and about his general rejection of them, a matter in which he rightly insists that Donne was quite exceptional. Had he been able to confine himself to a paragraph, he might perhaps have said something really illuminating about the Nineteenth Elegy: as it is, he tends to become less and less convincing through sheer ponderousness and over-emphasis. After a very tedious 'explication' of 'Loves Alchymie' he reaches the sensible conclusion that the poem has, after all, much affinity with that well-established genre, the Renunciation Sonnet, in which the lover bids farewell to a love that 'reaches but to dust'. In the course of his examination of 'The Blossome' he has what seem to me some very sensible, and also some very nonsensical, remarks about those of Donne's poems that may

be supposed to have been addressed to Mrs. Herbert. As an example of what seems to me sense, I will quote his reply to Professor Pierre Legouis's argument that Donne could not possibly have addressed what he calls the 'coarse innuendo' of 'Practise may make her know some other part' to a woman of Mrs. Herbert's character:

Renaissance standards of propriety were different from those of the twentieth century, and coarseness, in any case, derives less from what is said than from the tone of saying it. (p. 220, n. 60)

And as an example of what seems to me nonsense I will summarize his remarks on the following passage in 'The Relique':

Our hands ne'r toucht the seales,
Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free.

He insists that 'seales' is a euphemism for the genitals, and that the meaning is that Mrs. Herbert's 'natural' sexual impulses were 'free' until her 'nature' was 'injur'd' by her 'late' marriage to Sir John Danvers. Mr. Hunt was driven, it seems, to this astonishing interpretation because he could not understand how the word 'late' could be applied to a law established at the very beginning of civilization. Is not the meaning, though, the only possible meaning, that law is later than nature, is, in comparison with nature, a recent thing, an innovation? (p. 222. Here, and sometimes elsewhere, there is a most inconvenient separation between the text and notes which, though really part of it, are printed at the end of the book.)

In his final chapter, 'Some Conclusions', Mr. Hunt begins with Mr. Eliot's remark that Donne possessed 'a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience', and proceeds to consider the many topics and experiences in the poetry of Donne's contemporaries which we do not find in Donne's. He has some interesting things to say about what seems to him the exceptionality of Donne's continual attempts to realize imaginatively, to visualize, theological doctrines and beliefs, to translate them into terms of what he regarded as scientific or natural fact, and about Donne's apparent inability to accept, as even Milton could, what Mr. Hunt calls 'myth'. Here Mr. Hunt has certainly drawn attention to an interesting and important fact, although I doubt whether he is right in regarding it as evidence of Donne's 'most profound estrangement from the temper of the Middle Ages and his most essential bond with the new intellectual temper which was evolving in the Renaissance' (p. 163). Did not some of the Fathers, with whose writings Donne was so familiar, attempt in just this way to visualize their beliefs? Mr. Hunt regards as a further example of Donne's affinity with the scientific temper his use in their original and limited sense of dozens of words which were then acquiring a wider, looser, more modern meaning. Here a careful comparison between the use of certain selected words by Donne and by, let us say, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Jonson would have been more illuminating than much 'explication'. From this point the chapter (or essay) becomes increasingly speculative and unconvincing. Can we, with any certainty, infer from the fact that Donne nowhere praises Queen Elizabeth, and

from his treatment of her in 'The Progresse of the Soule', that he *hated* her? (pp. 166-7). Is the fact that Donne took no part in what Mr. Hunt would have us regard as the general poetic and patriotic endeavour to produce a great national literature by 'imitation' to be regarded as a consequence of the fact that he had 'set his face against Elizabethan nationalism'? (p. 169). Is there any evidence that Donne's renunciation of the Roman Church left him with 'lingering feelings of guilt and apostasy'? (p. 171). Because, at the end of 'The Canonization', Donne declares that he and she will be revered as two saints whom love made one another's hermitage, it is surely absurd to say that in this poem Donne's 'imagination goes suddenly Catholic as he defends himself against the world' (p. 173). Towards the end of this too long and too undisciplined chapter there are some remarks upon the resemblance between Donne and St. Paul, from which I will quote a passage exemplifying only too well the kind of thing which, again and again, has so exasperated me with Mr. Hunt that I have perhaps not succeeded in being wholly fair to him:

As I read the embarrassing revelation in the last chapters of the second Epistle to the Corinthians of a passionate ego in a state of very poor repair, of a man teetering sadly in mental equilibrium as he tries to come out of his more comfortable pose of not suffering fools gladly and to put on humility, I find a record of private turbulences and vulgarities of soul which looks like something that the personal reticences of John Donne may well have concealed. (pp. 196-7)

Dr. Esch's book is entirely free from the characteristic defects of Mr. Hunt's, but, at the same time, perhaps rather too consistently plodding and too burdened with those rather desiccated analyses, paraphrases, and classifications which seem to be expected by, and are therefore, presumably, in some way useful to, examiners of academic theses, or, as Mr. Hunt calls them, 'experts'. The most entirely satisfying portion of his book is the Introduction, which contains an excellent review of the various estimates and explanations of the so-called 'metaphysical' poets which have been offered during the last thirty or forty years. Dr. Esch wisely remarks that there has been too much inclination to regard as characteristically seventeenth century, or 'baroque', an awareness of paradox that is as old as the Fathers, and also to forget that the seventeenth-century religious poets were concerned with the personal only in its relation to the supra-personal. He declares that the chief purpose of his book will be to make a careful examination of poetic structure in the work of his chosen authors, because here the relation between the personal and the supra-personal can be most clearly demonstrated; nevertheless, in what follows, this admirable, if ambitious, intention too often seems to disappear like an underground stream. There is indeed much analysis, but it is often difficult to see just what it is intended to demonstrate. The first chapter, on 'The Problem of Religious Poetry', consists of a reply to Dr. Johnson's insistence that such poetry was impossible, an exposition of George Herbert's conception of religious poetry, and a rather perfunctory and inconclusive comparison between Herbert's religious poetry and that of Donne, Vaughan, and Crashaw. In his second chapter, on Donne's Religious Poetry, after a sensible review of the *Songs and Sonets*, Dr. Esch remarks that, while in these poems the

experimentalism and independence of Donne's attitude found expression in the originality and variety of his metres and stanza-forms, in his religious poetry, where he was trying to make a given truth his own, Donne required forms corresponding to the much greater objectivity of his subject-matter. There follow some painstaking analyses, from which (for me, at any rate) all that clearly emerges are the facts that the material of the Holy Sonnets is more suitable to the sonnet form than that of the *La Corona* sonnets, and that the tense, quiet openings of the Hymns, mounting up to a carefully planned climax, are very unlike the impetuous beginnings of so many of the *Songs and Sonets*. The third chapter, on George Herbert, consists mainly of laborious prose analyses from which I have failed to derive any illumination. The fourth chapter is devoted to a comparison between those of Crashaw's poems which exist in more than one version, but here again (for me, at any rate—it may not be so for others) Dr. Esch's analyses tend to be so laborious and systematic that it is hard to see what they are intended to demonstrate. Is not such criticism (or investigation, or whatever it is to be called) liable to an objection similar to that which Lessing advanced against the descriptive poetry of his day—that we cannot take it in as a whole, and that by the time we have reached the end (or even the middle) we have forgotten the beginning? If one or two significant generalizations can be made about Crashaw's alterations and revisions, let each of them be supported by a few well-chosen examples from several poems; if they cannot, the business of analysis and comparison may be left to the reader, for he will soon have forgotten what has been laboriously exhibited to him. However, Dr. Esch does show (I think, for the first time) that the later transpositions in the Letter to the Countess of Denbigh are not happy, and that in the later version the simile of the frozen rivers (ll. 21 ff.) is not properly connected either with what precedes or with what follows it (p. 132). His concluding survey of Crashaw's poetic development is sensible and illuminating: nevertheless, although it is clear that Crashaw proceeded from a poetry of wit and epigram in loosely related stanzas to a kind of religious love-poetry in much more untransposably constructed irregular odes, it is perhaps doubtful whether the Letter to the Countess of Denbigh and the Epiphany Ode are either sufficient in themselves to support the generalization that Crashaw was definitely moving towards a more argumentative and philosophic poetry, or are demonstrably more tightly constructed and untransposable than some of their predecessors. The fifth chapter is devoted to an examination of Crashaw's versions of Latin hymns, versions where the originals are greatly expanded and too often diluted and turned to favour and to prettiness. Here, perhaps, Dr. Esch spends too much time and labour in demonstrating what is sufficiently obvious, and too little in developing really fruitful observations: his remark, for example, about some passages in the version of 'O gloriosa Domina', 'What the Latin text merely suggests, Crashaw develops with *argutezza*' (p. 154), is one that, if pursued, might have led to some interesting reflections on the really characteristic differences between the typical seventeenth-century 'conceit' and earlier kinds of poetic 'wit'. His final chapter deals with 'Henry Vaughan's Conception of Nature', and is devoted almost exclusively to a demonstration of the important but not, surely, very disputable fact that Vaughan's attitude to nature

is very different from that of the romantic poets, and that in all his so-called 'nature poems' he starts with an idea or a doctrine for which he finds in natural appearances a kind of analogical confirmation. Here I cannot but feel that Dr. Esch's careful analyses tend rather to blunt than to sharpen one's perception of the essential *thisness* of Vaughan's poetry. And when he declares that Vaughan is not interested in the individuality of natural things but only in their emblematical value, I cannot help wondering whether he believes that all 'religious' poets view things in this way, and only 'romantic' poets in another. A careful comparison of Vaughan's procedure with that of other poets, above all with that of Hopkins, would have been most illuminating. The fact is that analysis without comparison soon begins to yield diminishing returns.

Professor Pierre Legouis has produced a most careful and scholarly line-for-line translation into French prose (the English and the French on opposite pages) of a large and well-chosen selection from Donne's poetry, with a lively Introduction and some most useful notes. His book will surely prove quite indispensable to all French readers of Donne's poetry, and will probably introduce many of them to it for the first time. There are many things on which I should have liked to comment, but space is limited and I must confine myself to three:

'Aire and Angels' (pp. 72-73 and p. 205, n.):

Whilst thus to ballast love, I thought,
And so more steddily to have gone,
With wares which would sinke admiration,
I saw, I had loves pinnace overfraught.

Despite the clumsy inversion (which perhaps M. Legouis could not bring himself to accept) I think there can be no doubt that Donne's meaning is 'I saw that I had overfraught love's pinnace with wares which would sink admiration', and that M. Legouis's rendering, together with his ingenious attempt to make 'sinke' mean 'keep down in the water', is not possible:

Tandis que je pensais ainsi lester l'amour
(et naviguer avec plus de stabilité)
d'une cargaison qui ferait enfoncer l'admiration,
je vis que j'avais surchargé la pinasse de l'amour.

'The Undertaking', note on l. 6 (p. 203):

It were but madnes now t'impart
The skill of specular stone.

I doubt whether M. Legouis can be right in saying that here the phrase means a magic mirror for seeing the future. Sir Herbert Grierson, in his large edition (vol. ii, p. 12) accepted this interpretation and referred, for confirmation, to the use of the same phrase in one of the verse letters to the Countess of Bedford ('Honour is so sublime perfection'), l. 29. However, in his *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems* (1921), p. 236, Sir Herbert assumes that in this verse letter the phrase means translucent stone, as it certainly does in the passage from one of Donne's

sermons which he quotes. It is hard to suppose that Donne was not using the phrase in the same sense in 'The Undertaking'.

'Second Anniversarie', l. 290:

In this low forme, poore soule, what wilt thou doe?

M. André Koszul's interpretation, 'in this low class', which M. Legouis mentions in a note on p. 217 and follows in his translation, is very attractive. Would that it had been possible to do more justice to this admirable and stimulating book!

J. B. LEISHMAN

Dryden and the Art of Translation. By WILLIAM FROST. Pp. xii+100 (Yale Studies in English 128). New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1955. \$3.50: 28s. net.

Mr. Frost's book consists of a discursive essay on the translator's art, an analysis of Dryden's methods, and a discussion of his translations as 'aspects of a larger literary and cultural problem: the assimilation by a modern age . . . of memories of a heroic past'. It matches its theme neither in magnitude nor in quality. The first essay, rather extravagantly entitled 'Theory of Translation', is sensible and provocative, particularly on the translator's task of constructing 'convincing analogies for pillar symbols' in his original, and of creating fresh 'local symbolism' for himself; and the other essays throw light on occasional passages in Dryden's poems. Mr. Frost writes with penetration on 'Palamon and Arcite'. But students of Dryden, while acknowledging the fitful illumination in Mr. Frost's book, will question his methods. Although he modestly describes his analysis as 'exploratory', it is a brisk week-end excursion rather than an expedition properly planned and equipped. The essential equipment for an investigation of this kind is Dryden's own critical writing, in which he develops his view of translation and relates it to almost every one of his originals. What he intended to do with the Latin and Greek poets—and what he thought he had done—is relevant to a study of his translations. Mr. Frost deals summarily with the distinctions between metaphor, paraphrase, and imitation (pp. 31-32), which are only the framework of Dryden's elaborate discussions of his art; and the basis of the critical analysis that follows is Mr. Frost's own 'theory of translation'. The consequences are unfortunate.

'At a certain stage in their respective development', says J. S. Phillimore in his brilliant *Remarks on Translation and Translators* (which Mr. Frost mentions but has failed to make use of), 'two languages . . . correspond by analogous characteristics; and this resemblance is the first condition of success in any attempt to translate a really original writer.' Dryden was acutely aware of this fundamental linguistic aspect of translation—aware of the difficulty not only of preserving the spirit of an ancient original but also of coping with 'a stock, which I may call almost inexhaustible, of figurative, Elegant, and sounding Words' in 'a Language so much inferiour to the Latin'. The immediate issue for the critic, as it was for Dryden, is not the representation of classical themes and symbols in Restoration terms, but the qualitative differences between Dryden's poetic language and

that of his originals. Mr. Frost describes the *Juvenal* as 'gross mock heroic' (pp. 68-69)—an illustration of one Augustan method of dealing with an 'uncomfortably grand inheritance', by 'the admixture, or adulteration, of epic, heroic, or classical materials with consciously modern, gross, and contrasting idiom and image' (p. 63). The point is suggestive. But the explanation of the difference between this translation and its original is rather, I think, that Dryden knew his English was unable to accommodate Juvenal's Latin—*vehemens, acer, ardens, gravis, grandiloquens, asper, tristis*—and that he compensated for this in a different, English satirical style, endeavouring 'to make him speak that kind of *English*, which he wou'd have spoken had he liv'd in *England*, and had written to this Age'. Mr. Frost regards Dryden's 'occasional' use of a latinate diction in the *Virgil* 'as imparting a "period" flavor to his style, and as being addressed perhaps especially to the educated reader' (p. 81). But Dryden's reasons were other than these, and much more important:

If sounding Words are not of our growth and Manufacture, who shall hinder me to Import them from a Foreign Country? . . . I Trade both with the Living and the Dead, for the enrichment of our Native Language. We have enough in *England* to supply our necessity; but if we will have things of Magnificence and Splendour, we must get them by Commerce. Poetry requires Ornament, and that is not to be had from our Old *Teuton* Monosyllables. . . .

Dryden, says Mr. Frost, matches Chaucer's sense of the precariousness of the human situation in *The Knight's Tale*; and his noble lines on 'the Monarch Oak, the Patriarch of the Trees' (iii. 1058-65; *C.T.* A 3017-26) are quoted as an example of his mastery of 'ideological poetry'. They are also an example (more significant for Mr. Frost's topic) of the maturing and enrichment of the language of poetry over three centuries. Much is made of Dryden's 'radical rehandling' ('Palamon and Arcite', iii. 959-64) of Chaucer's conventional catalogue of trees (*C.T.* A 2919-24): 'the pressure of the tradition within which Chaucer wrote is apparently greater on Dryden than is the exact literal meaning of Chaucer's phrases in the catalogue. There has thus occurred an adjustment of tone, which can only be evaluated in terms of Dryden's "Palamon and Arcite" as a whole' (pp. 36-38). It is much more likely that the undecorated concentration of 'oak, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popler . . .' seemed too awkward for mere translation—occasional examples of this rhetorical device in Restoration poetry are relatively short (cf. *Paradise Lost*. ii. 948-50; *Absalom and Achitophel*, ll. 550-1)—and that Dryden reduced the catalogue accordingly and adorned it with traditional epithets. (He owed something to *The Faerie Queene*, i. i. 8-9, as Mr. Frost points out; and he borrowed the 'swimming Alder' from *Virgil's Georgics*, i. 136.)

Mr. Frost takes no account of the doctrine of the 'kinds', or of Dryden's remarkable analyses of the styles of his originals, which were partly intended to indicate what he was trying to carry over into English. No distinction is made between Dryden's respect for the classics, in translating which an Augustan poet might make himself a 'noble collateral', and his attitude to the modernization and

'improvement' of a medieval original. In translating an ancient poet, says Dryden, 'we are bound to our Author's sense'; but Chaucer is

a rough Diamond, and must first be polish'd e'er he shines. . . . I have not ty'd my self to a Literal Translation; but have often omitted what I judg'd unnecessary, or not of Dignity enough. . . . I have presum'd farther in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my Author was deficient, and has not given his Thoughts their true Lustre, for want of Words in the Beginning of our Language.

The tales from *The Decameron* are treated even more freely, as a prose source to be liberally expanded and embellished. These distinctions are relevant to any discussion of Dryden's translations. Mr. Frost has nothing to say on the stories from Boccaccio, except that he has 'examined' them (and apparently found nothing worthy of note); though they are superb illustrations of that literary and cultural 'assimilation' in which Mr. Frost is interested. His whole discussion of the Chaucerian tales is vitiated by his belief, in contradiction of the evidence, that the 'flexibility' Dryden 'practiced (like that of any Renaissance translator) upon the literal prose sense of *The Canterbury Tales* is not essentially different from his methods with other, foreign poets' (p. 33).

Mr. Frost's 'theory of translation' has value. If he had considered it in the light of the critical prefaces, his interpretation of Dryden's aims and achievements would have been less unscholarly and sophisticate.

JAMES KINSLEY

Thomas Gray. A Biography. By R. W. KETTON-CREMER. Pp. xiv+310. Cambridge: University Press, 1955. 25s. net.

In some ways Gray may be compared with Gibbon, only in the end to mark the contrast. Both read the classics exhaustively with annotating pen and folio notebooks at hand. Gray, as Mr. Ketton-Cremer shows, 'ranged from the sublimities of philosophy and poetry to the smallest details of domestic life'. Gibbon did much the same. In their century they were unapproached peers of learning. Gray of course was the better 'Mods. scholar', if that term may be applied to a Cambridge man. But Gray had not Gibbon's unrelenting sense of direction and architectonic genius. Disinterested though his love of learning might be, his studies were largely conceived to disperse a lifelong melancholy and, so to speak, to get through the day.

And yet, 'doth God exact day labour?' In that leisured, undemanding age the recluse of Peterhouse and Pembroke went his way, gathering and hiving so much that was to enchant and influence posterity: his poetry, his discursive scholarship, his detailed observation of nature, the broad and vivid notes of scenery, and his delightful humour. He was indeed an instance of genius within a type that is not, happily, quite extinct in these days of output and efficiency, and his biographer is doubtless right in combating Arnold's view that he 'would have been a different sort of man if he had lived in a different period of history!'

The outstanding merit of this sympathetic and gracefully written biography is that it presents Gray himself absolutely, so far as may be nowadays, and also sets

him firmly and vividly in the society of his day, be it in Cambridge, Stoke Poges, or London. The picture of eighteenth-century Cambridge in itself makes this book valuable. The learning in it is profound and the arrangement and judgement excellently balanced. This is particularly so in narrating Gray's relations with men and women. Although the story never goes wrong, perhaps something more might have been said at times. The author has been reluctant 'to carry speculation beyond the evidence'. But speculation at its best is a further sifting of the evidence. When all is said about Gray's unhappy home, of his unequal friendships at Eton and after, and of his persistent melancholy, one feels something more can be looked for. As the author points out, Gray's young friend had a boyhood remarkably like his own. 'But there the resemblance ended. No cloud of melancholy ever weighed upon the spirits of Norton Nicholls.' Is it not worth recalling the Miltonic precept, 'the mind is its own place'? Beyond that one cannot go, but it is none the less worth stressing in these days of backgrounds and influences. There was surely too a congenital reticence indicated by the heavy chin and tight mouth, which are better seen in the monument in the Abbey than in any of the admirable illustrations here. Arnold in a way was right. Gray would not speak out. Bonstetten found that. There, if anywhere, one would have expected confidences in that last overwhelming obsession of the lonely ageing man for a fascinating youth. But no, he would not talk of his poetry. Mr. Ketton-Cremer expresses surprise that Bonstetten should say that Gray had never been in love. Possibly Bonstetten was right. The poet had never been able to give himself to another.

Another aspect of the same reticence may well have been at play over the Pindaric odes. It is at times a foible with the learned recluse to wrap himself up in dark meanings and then be piqued when the world is baffled or indifferent. Gray asked for this when he underlined the esoteric quality of the odes with a motto from Pindar that only a few would understand anyway. Neither the author nor Mr. Powell Jones,¹ to whom he makes acknowledgement, has pressed home the analysis of Gray's debt to the classics and to Pindar particularly. It is not quite enough to point out, as Gray himself had done, the echoes of ancient poetry. The difficulties of the odes were due to the novel subject-matter. They bear no relation to the intricate transitions of the Greek poet's thought. In brief, it may be said that, apart from the superficial metrical arrangements of these poems, they are not, to put it mildly, awfully like Pindar. Nevertheless, much of the essence of ancient poetry is re-created in these poems, and a closer examination might yet bring it out.

So much may be said without detracting from the brilliance and solidity of a work which deals so fairly with every side of Gray, and it only remains to praise the scholarly index and the elegant production of the book.

D. M. Low

¹ W. Powell Jones, *Thomas Gray, Scholar* (1937).

The Monthly Review. Second Series, 1790-1815. Indexes of Contributors and Articles. By BENJAMIN CHRISTIE NANGLE. Pp. xx+267. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955. 30s. net.

Nothing could be more flattering to a reviewer than a scholarly book about reviewers: it is cheering to imagine that some student may one day be encouraged to list this periodical's contributors, each with a short and kind biography. Anonymous reviewing, as necessary and as embarrassing today as it was in the eighteenth century, is a particularly interesting subject. (Many authors would give an even warmer welcome to an accurate index to *The Times Literary Supplement* of the 1950's.) The anonymity of the *Monthly Review* was jealously guarded by its first two editors, but fortunately their private file, marked with initials or abbreviations to indicate the contributors, has been preserved in the Bodleian. This file is the basis of Professor Nangle's work, although he has had to do much skilful research to establish some of the vaguer identifications, and has added a considerable amount of biographical data, as well as a numbered index of articles. In 1934 he published a similar work on the First Series, 1749-89; the sequel takes us as far as it is possible to go. In 1790 Ralph Griffiths, having reached the age of seventy, continued to edit the *Review* which he had founded in 1749. He did, however, begin to transfer much of the editorial responsibility to his son George Edward Griffiths, who became sole editor on his father's death in 1803. After 1815 the younger Griffiths evidently considered that the practice of marking copies was an insufficient safeguard of secrecy; and the private papers in which he may have recorded contributors' names up to 1825 have not been recovered. Professor Nangle's task is now completed and he should earn the gratitude of everyone interested in the period for having produced a most useful work of reference.

In the course of some interesting remarks about the *Monthly Review's* position in the new era, Professor Nangle points out that it failed to compete with the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* for style and dash. There was, however, no absolute decline in the standard of reviewing: 'Men of established reputation were joined by an impressive group of brilliant young men.' The index includes Dr. Burney, Isaac D'Israeli, Jeffrey, James Mill, Porson, Sheridan, and Wolcot; Fanny Burney and Byron put in brief appearances. The recruits included sixteen recent graduates of Cambridge, the most regular being Denman, Hodgson, Merivale, and Woodhouse, who helped to bring in Dobrée, Harness, Le Bas, and others. Some of these men were friends of Byron, and nearly all had successful careers in academic life, the law, or the church; from the information given here one can learn something about Cambridge's contribution at the turn of the century. It is a pity that Professor Nangle did not check the *D.N.B.* and his own researches against the most obvious and reliable source, Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, and that he does not include in every case the salient facts of a contributor's life, even to the date of his reviewing. He does not always say if a contributor was a Fellow, Senior Wrangler, or M.A. ('took his degree' is too vague). True, Venn's last two volumes (P-Z) appeared too late to be of service, but the use of the earlier volumes would have prevented the following relevant facts from being omitted or given

inaccurately. Banks, M.P. for the University 1822-6; Bland, Pembroke, friend of Byron, curate of Prittlewell 1813, of Kenilworth 1816; Butler, Senior Wrangler, Fellow of Sidney Sussex; Denman, B.A. 1800; Harness, admitted to John's before Christ's, B.A. 1812, M.A. 1816, curate of Kilmeston 1813; Hodgson, Fellow of King's 1803-15, B.A. 1804, M.A. 1807, married 1815 (not 1814), curate of Bradden 1815 (here Venn corrects the *D.N.B.*'s dates); Le Bas, 4th Wrangler, B.A. 1800, M.A. 1803, Fellow of Trinity 1802, abandoned law because of deafness, tutor to sons of Bishop of Lincoln 1808, took orders 1812 (not 1809) and got a living that year (not 1811); Maule, B.A. 1810; Merivale, friend of Byron, Presbyterian and so took no degree, admitted Lincoln's Inn 1798, called to the Bar 1804, reported Chancery cases from 1815 (i.e. just after his reviewing). From the volumes P-Z: William Paley, 3rd Wrangler, Fellow of Pembroke; Pearne, 14th Wrangler, admitted Inner Temple 1777; Smyth, 8th Wrangler, Fellow of Peterhouse 1785-1825; Woodhouse, Senior Wrangler, B.A. 1795. There does not seem to be any reason for Professor Nangle's inconsistency in supplying this kind of data. From a look at this group of clever young men, hovering between academic and public life, taking up reviewing to fill a gap between a fellowship and a living, or between a private tutorship and the Bar, one can see how the 'Namierization' of literature and higher journalism in the period might proceed. Professor Nangle deserves every credit for contributing so much to the sociology of authorship.

M. J. C. HODGART

Coleridge and Sara Hutchinson and the Asra Poems. By GEORGE WHALLEY. Pp. xxi + 188. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955. 21s. net.

Mr. Whalley's first chapter 'Sara's Poets' reproduces in print and examines the Coleridge part of a notebook in which S. H. entered poems by Coleridge at one end and poems by Wordsworth at the other. She entitled the notebook, not earlier than 1802, 'Sarah Hutchinson's Poets'. This apparent refusal by Sarah to drop her *h* (Miss Coburn's edition of her *Letters* provides no evidence) looks like one more indication that her affection for Coleridge was strictly sensible and sisterly. Coleridge would sometimes have liked it to be less restrained, but even he—for all the intermittent obsession with her absent image which his notebooks show—wanted the sisterly, or perhaps the maternal. But the psychologists can stress what the youngest child missed at home, and what he missed still more during long years of school with no holiday homegoing.

Mr. Whalley's transcript starts with a lighthearted doggerel 'Soliloquy of the full Moon' not previously published, and continues with eight poems published in the *Morning Post* in 1799, 1801, or 1802, and with two first published much later (fifteen lines of one are now published for the first time). Some lines and corrections are in Coleridge's hand and it is good to have the whole available, together with four photographed pages. Whether it throws much new light on 'Coleridge and Asra' is another question. Mr. Whalley admits that, if the notebook is an anthology, 'the flowers have been culled upon principles so secret as to be impenetrable'. That is a sound remark, especially as Mr. Whalley's book is not exempt from the occupational hazard of trying to prove too much. The last

entry is 'The Devil's Thoughts'. That was written before Coleridge met Asra, but was entered in the notebook by Coleridge himself, apparently to preface 'The Angel's Thoughts', i.e. Asra's. It is significant that no 'Angel's Thoughts' follow.

Mr. Whalley's second and longest chapter is historical. It presents, in chronological sequence and in their setting, the known facts about the relations of Coleridge and Asra from their first meeting in the autumn of 1799 to their parting in the spring of 1810. This will be very useful.

The next chapter on 'The Asra Poems' and a thirty-page appendix of texts are more difficult to assess. Mr. Whalley starts from and adds to Professor Raysor's 1929 list of such poems. The most important addition, more important than all the rest of the 'Asra Poems' put together, is 'A Letter to —' (the longer and earlier form of 'Dejection: An Ode') which was first published by de Selincourt in the 1936 *Essays and Studies* (published 1937). Mr. Whalley prints for the first time, from a notebook, eighteen lines of Latin elegiacs 'Ad Vilmum Axiologum'. They begin

Me n' Asrae perferre jubes oblivia? et Asrae
Me aversos oculos posse videre meae?

Here where mention of Asra is explicit, and elsewhere where there can be no doubt that it is implicit, we must thank Mr. Whalley for providing significant evidence of Coleridge's thoughts. The difficulty arises when he seeks to weigh down the scale with Coleridge's poetic imagery. 'Made up as it was during the time when Coleridge's love for Asra dominated his life, the manuscript cannot fail to exhibit the imagery in which he uttered forth that love; and very little serious poetry that he wrote after his first meeting with her but is saturated with that imagery' (pp. 138-9). Here we notice first a recession from Mr. Whalley's earlier and safer statement about the 'anthology' and secondly a logical fallacy about the imagery. A better way to put the second statement might be 'the poetry in which he uttered forth that love is saturated with his characteristic imagery'. By putting the love causally or chronologically before the imagery (some of which he honestly enough traces to poems written before the first meeting with Asra) Mr. Whalley has been betrayed into including among the 'Asra Poems' even Coleridge's great 1807 poem to Wordsworth on hearing him read his poem 'On the Growth of an Individual Mind'.¹ Surely Coleridge was emphatically not a poet whose imagery was inspired by any woman. Moreover, though 'Dejection: an Ode' is biographically less interesting than the longer 'Letter', it is a better poem, better by the elimination of most of the overt references to Sarah and of all reference to Mary Hutchinson and to Coleridge's 'coarse domestic life'.

There are too many misprints and other slips in this book. Two mistakes are particularly distressing. (1) Dykes Campbell looked up an 1861 edition of Marini and found 'Alla sua Amica' given there as the title of a sonnet which Coleridge translated. In Dykes Campbell's 1893 edition of Coleridge the last

¹ Mr. Whalley defines an Asra poem as one 'referring to or inspired by Sara Hutchinson'. The poem to Wordsworth contains a few lines on Love and Hope.

word is misprinted 'Amico'. Mr. Whalley, who may have no Italian but must have some Latin, not once but three times prints 'Alla sua Amico'. (2) The fresh transcript of 'A Letter to —', interesting as it is as containing rejected readings, prints line 95 as 'Those dear wild Eyes'. The eyes are Asra's. De Selincourt in 1937, by misreading or misprint, printed 'wild'. He corrected it to 'mild' in 1947 in *Wordsworthian and Other Studies*, and A. H. House reprinted 'mild' in his *Coleridge* (1953). Mr. Whalley reverts to 'wild'. It is no misprint, for in a footnote he compares Dorothy Wordsworth's 'wild eyes' in 'Tintern Abbey'. He also provides a photograph of the page, so that we can there read 'Those dear mild Eyes'. Now here, as with 'Amico', Mr. Whalley ought not to have been satisfied with an impossibility. The difference between Dorothy and Sarah is almost epitomized in those two adjectives.

But if this book is not impeccable (there is a bad chronological muddle on p. 122) and if its reader must preserve an alert judgement, it is nevertheless both interesting and valuable. The chapter on the Asra poems traces many subtle connexions of thought, feeling, and imagery. Mr. Whalley makes it abundantly clear that Coleridge 'uttered forth that love'. When all reservations have been made, this will remain *the* book on its subject.

H. M. MARGOLIOUTH

Matthew Arnold. By J. D. JUMP. Pp. viii + 185. London: Longmans, Green, 1955. 10s. 6d. net.

This book has important merits. It is well proportioned, lucidly and interestingly written, and while the emphasis is necessarily on general survey—in which a judicious use is made of the available space—there is little feeling of either staleness or constriction. Unfortunately, however, its merits are seriously compromised by the radical de-rating of Arnold's poetry attempted in Chapter Two, which gives the book its salient character. Attention is there focused on two defects especially which Mr. Jump imputes to his victim: thinking aloud and the cult of poeticality. On the former, he is misled by Arnold's own antithesis between *thinking aloud* and *making anything* into erecting too easy an opposition between poetry whose thought-structure is as exposed as Arnold's habitually is, and something aesthetically satisfying. He reaches his gravamen in these words:

Broodingly, [Arnold] states his thoughts; he introduces apt if sometimes bookish examples; but hardly ever does he 'create an aesthetically satisfying object which will adequately embody his thoughts and compel us, as we contemplate it, to relive them. (p. 74)

We may emphatically question 'hardly ever'. A drastic application of the shears disposes of 'The Buried Life', 'A Summer Night', and the first 'Obermann' elegy, as well as of 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', 'Rugby Chapel', and 'Heine's Grave'. Not to discriminate these from, let us say, the second 'Obermann' elegy, 'The Youth of Nature', and 'The Youth of Man' argues a serious failure in perception. The last-named item (ll. 51–60, 112–18) furnishes the vital quotation-passages for the thinking-aloud test (pp. 69–70). These are as unfairly chosen as is the second 'Obermann' elegy for citing as 'a good instance' of Arnold's meditative poetry. Nor is such poetry described at all accurately as 'a lucid recital of a

series of ideas, about our reception of which [Arnold] evidently feels a trifle uneasy—hence his attempts to soften-up our resistance by a barrage of italics, interjections, and marks of exclamation' (p. 70).

On poeticality, Arnold is taxed with an 'inability to free himself sufficiently from his age's preconceptions regarding what was truly poetical' (p. 82). Such poeticality, with or without an offending escape factor, is found to disfigure his most famous lyric ('Yes: in the sea of life enis!d'), 'Palladium', the songs of Callicles, and the two Oxford poems. Only one poem receives unstinted praise—it is even called great—namely 'Dover Beach'; but such criteria of excellence as emerge from a long discussion (pp. 75–81) are insufficiently decisive to establish it in so singular a pre-eminence. 'Empedocles' and 'Sohrab' are also treated at length and, on the whole, justly. Two short pieces, to which Arnold must have attached small importance, are given 'warm admiration': 'Growing Old' and 'Palladium'.

Much that is objected against Arnold would, if pursued afield, cause ravage far and wide throughout the known and loved extent of English poetry. Here, for instance, is part of what is said of the Oxford poems:

This is poetry of great charm ['The Scholar Gipsy', stanzas 21–23]. But it is poetry which belongs too completely to the world of poetry. It lacks the reality and urgency of . . . (p. 101)

Admittedly, the stresses and clashes of life are acknowledged in the poems; but they are much less concretely present there than is the idyllic landscape to which the poet flies from them. . . . What we are offered is a brief escape from the human predicament 'on the viewless wings of Poesy'. There are times when we are glad to make such an escape. But the fact remains that the greatest poetry is that which confronts and in some sense masters the predicament. (p. 108)

Leaving aside the suggestion that these poems have been (or ever could be) ranked with the greatest poetry, is there anything in these observations which does not apply with equal force to Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale'? Blessed word 'escape'. The high pastoral tradition itself, to which 'Thyrsis' more especially belongs, suggests (what is rather the case) that the stresses and clashes of life—to which may be added the discussion of familiar topics—are *contained* within an all-subduing frame of poetry.

The debt to Dr. Leavis would not have been more evident than it is if he had figured constantly in the text instead of gaining no mention there whatever. Naturally the section on the Oxford poems resounds most with his accents (see especially pp. 101, 104, 108): so much does it do so, indeed, that there is satisfaction in remarking how far short Mr. Jump stops of the frightening accusation of 'weak confusion' and 'intellectual debility' brought by Dr. Leavis against the greater poem of the two. On Arnold's prose Mr. Jump keeps with notable success to the critic's responsibility, insisted on by Dryden, to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader. His failure to do likewise for the verse, which is no less important, is sufficiently prominent to compel the regret that this volume, in a series for the general reader, should not have been assigned to somebody in closer sympathy with the ruling presuppositions of nineteenth-century poetic.

J. P. CURGENVEN

Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel. By ROBERT HUMPHREY.
Pp. vii+127. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press;
London: Cambridge University Press, 1954. 21s. net.

Mr. Humphrey, whose book has the virtues and the limitations of a superior M.A. or B.Litt. thesis, is very conscious of the need for definitions. Sensibly he cuts through a great deal of undergrowth by insisting that 'the stream-of-consciousness novel is identified most quickly by its subject matter'. The subject-matter is described most satisfactorily perhaps as 'the psychological aspects of character', with the rider that it is 'the pre-speech levels of consciousness' which have been the particular concern of those whose work comes properly within the category which Mr. Humphrey defines.

This approach—the insistence that the essential starting-point is subject-matter rather than technique—is a useful one, partly because it is clear and permits of consistency, and partly because it has in it the elements of an empiricism much needed in this kind of topic. So long as he remains empirical Mr. Humphrey is almost always admirable; but from time to time he permits himself—without apparently being always aware that he has made the transition—to wander into more dubious fields. On p. 1, for instance, he defines the subject-matter of the novels he is dealing with in the phrase I have quoted above. But by p. 4 the phrase 'presentation of psychological aspects of character' has been altered to 'revealing the psychic being of the characters', a definition not merely less precise but positively bristling with metaphysical ambiguities.

Mr. Humphrey's examination of stream-of-consciousness fiction is in practice limited to the work (and, in three cases, only a part of the work) of four writers: Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner, though he quotes also from a very rum novel by Waldo Frank. He makes an important distinction between the basis of the work of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf on the one hand and that of James Joyce and Mr. Faulkner on the other, seeing the women novelists as working in an impressionist tradition involving the theoretical as well as the practical emphasis on a subjective view of reality, while the two men are concerned rather to extend the naturalistic tradition in fiction to cover areas of experience hitherto more or less ignored. From this distinction emerges also the view that with Mr. Faulkner the stream-of-consciousness genre ceases to be separable from other types of novel. By now, Mr. Humphrey argues, stream of consciousness has been absorbed into the main tradition of fiction.

Mr. Humphrey's best pages, perhaps, are on Faulkner—*The Sound and the Fury* in particular—and he has some very perceptive remarks on Virginia Woolf. Here one would query merely a few details. Mr. Humphrey usefully reminds us that whereas Joyce and Faulkner constantly use *symbols* to give an expanded significance to private experience, the women novelists work more often in terms of *imagery*. But he then goes on to discuss *To the Lighthouse* in the language of symbolism. 'The lighthouse is a symbol, just as the setting of the novel . . . is used symbolically, and just as the characters and their actions are symbolic.' Is this really a satisfactory way of describing this particular novel? And, incidentally,

is not Mrs. Bennett's ingenious suggestion (quoted with approval by Mr. Humphrey) that the structure of the book—long first movement, short second, long third—is related to the long-short-long flashes of the lighthouse beam refuted by a sentence from the novel itself? 'Turning, she looked across the bay, and there, sure enough, coming regularly across the waves, *first two quick strokes and then one long steady stroke*, was the light of the Lighthouse' (my italics).

Again, Mr. Humphrey twice asserts that the 'subject' of *Ulysses* is 'the psychic life of the characters'. Is this really so? And does not perhaps the limitation of such a statement reflect an unsatisfactoriness deep in the critical method here involved? Having asserted that the essential factor in the stream-of-consciousness novel is its subject-matter, should not the critic be content to say of a book like *Ulysses* that only a part of it comes within the scope of his inquiry at all?

Mr. Humphrey is on duller but safer paths when he offers a number of technical analyses of differing methods of presentation within the stream-of-consciousness genre, discriminating for instance between direct and indirect interior monologue, omniscient description and soliloquy, and examining a number of cinema techniques—of the *montage* variety—which his authors have adopted for their particular purposes. This part of the book seems to me the most valuable, for in the course of the apparently rather dry and limited technical discriminations there emerge numerous insights into the differing qualities and purposes of these always experimental and sometimes very subtle novelists.

A. C. KETTLE

Inspiration and Poetry. By C. M. BOWRA. Pp. viii+266. London: Macmillan, 1955. 21s. net.

The Warden of Wadham occupies a unique position in English criticism today. He is a classical scholar of the first rank, a high authority on Greek poetry, and the author of standard works on Homer, Sophocles, and the Greek lyric. He is also master of most of the chief European languages, and in particular a student of Russian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese poetry. He is as much at home in the European poetry of the twentieth century as in the Attic poetry of the fourth century B.C. His study of the *Heritage of Symbolism* is a contribution of major importance to the criticism of modern European poetry. He is as interested in the primitive epics of Europe and Asia as he is in the poetry of the Symbolists and their successors, and his *Heroic Poetry* is a work which will have a permanent place beside Gilbert Murray's *Rise of the Greek Epic* and Chadwick's *Heroic Age*. Finally he is an accomplished writer of English verse, whose delicate and sensitive translations of Russian poetry are the delight and despair of all who practise the exacting and fascinating craft of verse translation.

The present volume of collected essays illustrates very well the remarkable range of his interests and the catholic quality of his scholarship and criticism. There are, as we should expect, well-informed and illuminating essays on the two great Russian masters Pushkin and Lermontov. Three essays deal with English authors, others with the songs of the medieval Portuguese poet Gil Vicente, the Central American Spanish poet Rubén Darío, and the pantheistic hymns of the German Hölderlin. The Odes of Horace are the subject of a short and suitably

urbane paper, and the relationship between Dante and the great troubadour Arnaut Daniel is discussed in an interesting and suggestive essay. The most exotic theme treated in the collection is the Georgian epic called in the English translation 'The Knight in the Tiger's Skin', and this is the only work among those discussed in this book which the critic knows solely through translations.

In spite of the diversity of its contents the reader of this book does not get the impression that he is delving through a haphazard collection of essays and addresses. The chapters are held together by the writer's delight in poetry and his remarkable powers of sympathetic interpretation. In his preface Sir Maurice Bowra expresses the hope that the papers in the collection 'may be found to have some connexion with each other or at least to discuss matters with which lovers of poetry are concerned and which are not too distantly related to the subject treated in the first chapter'. This subject, which gives its title to the volume, is 'Inspiration and Poetry' and the paper that deals with it is, perhaps, the least satisfactory part of the volume. Sir Maurice is at his best as a writer of appreciations of literary excellence as embodied in specific works. He is at his worst in the discussion of abstract critical problems. Admittedly poetic inspiration is a difficult subject to handle, and possibly that is the reason why most modern critics have avoided it. Sir Maurice makes a number of acute remarks about it and he quotes many revealing passages in which great poets have spoken of their own experiences. However, it must be admitted that in this essay he appears to talk gracefully and intelligently round his subject without coming to grips with it. He points out acutely that, while the primitive poet asserts that 'everything comes to him from some external, supernatural source', much primitive poetry 'however inspired, is at a low level, and must be admitted to be poor stuff'. 'The old notion of inspiration', he tells us, 'has much in common with the modern', but later he shows on the authority of Dante and others that 'inspiration . . . is of little avail unless its recipient is a master of technique and is prepared to take considerable pains with his gifts when he receives them'. The essay could have been more satisfying if Sir Maurice had brought out more clearly the distinction between the primitive notion of inspiration as a kind of automatism and the modern conception of inspiration controlled by critical intelligence. He points to Shakespeare and Pushkin as poets in whose work inspiration and criticism are happily combined, but surely they are not always such harmonious yokefellows as he would have us suppose. What of Coleridge and Matthew Arnold, to cite only two examples of poets in whose work there is obviously a failure to harmonize inspiration with a highly developed critical intelligence, resulting in a poetry which is, at its best, fragmentary and tantalizing?

The three essays that will particularly interest the student of English literature are those on *Samson Agonistes*, the lyrics of Thomas Hardy, and Walter Pater. The essay on *Samson Agonistes* begins with the rather questionable assumption that this poem represents the recovery by Milton of 'his confidence and with it his old interest in Greek poetry'. There is no evidence to support the view that *Samson Agonistes* was written after *Paradise Regained*, and *pace* Sir Maurice Bowra there is none to show that Milton ever lost his 'confidence' or 'interest' in Greek poetry. The speeches of Christ in *Paradise Regained* are obviously

dramatic, and Sir Maurice's citation, from the early anonymous life of Milton, of the passage that states that 'David's Psalms were in esteem with him above all poetry' is no evidence at all. Almost any Christian poet of the seventeenth century would have agreed with this judgement, whatever his opinion of Greek poetry might have been. However, apart from this unfortunate opening, the essay is a valuable contribution to the criticism of Milton's play, and it contains many illuminating observations on its relationship to Greek tragedy.

The lecture on 'The Lyrical Poetry of Thomas Hardy' is, perhaps, the most acute study of Hardy's poetry hitherto published. Here Sir Maurice's criticism is seen at its best in a brilliantly phrased and admirably illustrated appreciation of the work of a poet with whom he is thoroughly in sympathy. The discussions of individual poems of Hardy are particularly notable, and the page and a half in which *The Convergence of the Twain* is analysed and appraised is among the very best things of this kind in modern English criticism. The paper on Walter Pater is a delicate, sympathetic, and occasionally ironical study of that curious, and in recent years unfairly neglected, genius. The paragraph which relates Pater's work to that European movement that produced the philosophy of Nietzsche in Germany and the poetry of Mallarmé in France is a superb piece of that sort of comparative criticism which Sir Maurice is perhaps better qualified to produce than any living English critic.

It is to be hoped, however, that students of English literature will not confine their reading to these three essays. They will find great refreshment and stimulus in sampling under Sir Maurice's urbane and expert guidance the Georgian epic of Rust'vheli, the pantheistic hymns of Hölderlin, the exquisite songs of Gil Vicente, the chiselled odes of Horace, the flawless lyrics of Pushkin, Lermontov's stormy confessions, and Dario's enchanting melodies. Since the publication of the first series of *Essays in Criticism* no Oxford professor of poetry has taken his readers on so many exciting voyages of discovery. Winds from the four corners of earth blow through this book and to read it is a truly liberating experience.

V. DE S. PINTO

Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XXXIX, 1953. Pp. xiv+368.

London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1954. 63s. net.

In 'Walter de la Mare and *The Traveller*' Miss V. Sackville-West sets herself 'to examine an aspect of his attitude towards life, his *Weltanschauung*, which is usually overlooked in his earlier work; but which is there, discoverable if you search for it; and which finds its final expression in *The Traveller*'. This tribute to a true poet is both graceful and sincere, but the interpretation it offers of *The Traveller* is in the end half-hearted and Miss Sackville-West averts her critical eye from the final mystery of the poet's vision:

Not to achieve a merely temporal goal,
Not for bright glory, praise, or greed of gain,
But in that secret craving of the soul

For what no name has. . . .

Miss Sackville-West might have found not only additional evidence for her thesis but a clue to a fuller interpretation of her chosen poem even in *Peacock Pie*, in its splendid epilogue *The Song of Finis*.

In 'Shakespeare's Earliest Years in the Theatre' Professor Isaacs proposes to solve 'one of the chief mysteries in Shakespeare's biography', what the dramatist was doing from 1584 to 1594. It has for long been generally agreed that Greene's attack on the Shake-scene of *The Groatworth of Wit*, and Chettle's subsequent apology, provide some evidence about Shakespeare's early years in the theatre; but Mr. Isaacs will have none of it. The interpretation of these documents he dismisses as conjecture, for in his opinion *there is no proof*. Yet in the next sentence this rigorist, 'indulging for once', he warns us, 'in a little conjecture', substitutes for the rejected interpretations a guess of his own. To ask us to accept a conjecture because it is only a little one is like arguing that the size of a baby is evidence of its legitimacy; and the scepticism with which Mr. Isaacs views the conclusions of others is matched only by the indulgence with which he embraces the offspring of his own fancy. The lecture contains many interesting suggestions, but nowhere on any of the major issues does Mr. Isaacs offer us anything in the nature of what he himself calls proof.

P. A.

In his study of 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies' Dr. Kenneth Sisam brings his outstanding powers of critical acumen and lucid exposition to the patient unravelling of highly complicated problems which had defeated previous investigators. After a careful examination of the documents which include the genealogies, he is able to demonstrate that there was a Mercian collection in the reign of Offa, to which both Nennius and Cotton Vespasian B vi had access. This did not include Saxon genealogies, but that of Ine of Wessex was added, probably in the reign of Ecgberht. This Mercian collection was brought south some time after 840, and formed the basis of a southern collection, represented by C.C.C.C. 183, of the end of Athelstan's reign, and Cotton Tiberius B v, of Edgar's reign. The latter manuscript includes a West Saxon regnal table and a long West Saxon pedigree, both of which had by Edgar's time a considerable history behind them, and have come down to us in documents of Alfred's reign. Dr. Sisam examines them in detail, and concludes that the table is more probably an independent document than the preface originally composed for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and that the long West Saxon pedigree of King Æthelwulf, which occurs s.a. 855 in this Chronicle, was largely an artificial composition of Alfred's reign. It would require a long review to do justice to the subtlety of the argument or to point out all the additions this article makes to our knowledge. To a historian its outstanding importance is the demonstration that the genealogies are not primitive documents which can safely be used as evidence for the continental and invasion periods. For example, Dr. Sisam plausibly explains as a mechanical copyist's error the identical beginning of the genealogies of Bernicia and Wessex, on which various theories have been built. But, though the value of genealogies as a source for the remote past is thus diminished, Dr. Sisam shows that, correctly used, they add to knowledge of the reign of Offa of Mercia, and of the literary

relations between Mercia and early Wessex. Moreover, his study contains important information on the composition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in Alfred's reign, and on the relationship of this document to the Old English Bede. It has matter also for the student of Nennius, it lends support to those scholars who believe in the authenticity of Asser, and it includes an interesting and acceptable theory on the origin of Æthelweard's Latin Chronicle. To students of Anglo-Saxon literature its main interest will be its re-examination of the Scyld question. Finally, scattered through the text and footnotes, are several results of value to the Anglo-Saxon linguist. In short, it is an extremely valuable contribution to pre-Conquest studies.

DOROTHY WHITELOCK

SHORT NOTICES

A Handbook on Old High German Literature. By J. KNIGHT BOSTOCK. Pp. ix+257. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955. 25s. net.

This is a reference book for the student of German literature who has already a fair knowledge of Old High German, and of the problems which it poses. All the main texts are studied in detail and the views of past generations of critics are discussed, so that the student may be made aware of all the issues raised in interpreting the work, dating it, establishing its dialect, or suggesting its probable genesis. In all this Dr. Bostock has been thorough and painstaking. It is perhaps a pity that he is so reluctant to express a positive personal opinion, and is so consistently determined to avoid striking a balance between conflicting points of view: but his scholarship will be valued by all students in this restricted field. Students of English would doubtless have welcomed some allusion to the wider considerations of the Germanic heritage, or some linking up with the main monuments of Old English poetry. In circumscribing his subject so rigidly, Dr. Bostock has, however, made it plain that his book is not for them.

W. W. CHAMBERS

The Tale of the Death of King Arthur. By SIR THOMAS MALORY. Edited by EUGÈNE VINAVER. Pp. xxviii+146. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955. 15s. net.

Professor Vinaver has reprinted in a book of delightful appearance what he calls 'substantially the same text' of Caxton's Books XX and XXI as that in his three-volume edition of *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* (1947), together with the other relevant sections of that edition, 'in a revised form'. I have counted less than thirty differences from the text of 1947 recorded in the footnotes, and all can be safely disregarded by the literary critic. From the reprinted commentary he has omitted little, and there seems, in general, to be little significance in the omissions. An exception is the note to p. 94, ll. 10-22 (1947 edn., p. 1259, ll. 9-21) where he has omitted the quotation from the alliterative *Le Morte Arthur* which bears a very remote resemblance to Sir Ector's threnody. Another improvement is in the note to p. 92, ll. 17-20 (1947 edn., p. 1257, ll. 29-32) where he now translates *Bycause of brekyng of myn avowe* by 'to avoid breaking my promise', and omits the reference to Launcelot's 'series of somewhat incongruous remarks', about which there is not, as I see it, anything odd at all. But he repeats the error which prompted this observation by again interpreting at least the corresponding passage in *Le Morte Arthur* as a reference to a pledge of faith to Guinevere, whereas it is, as in Malory, a vow to be buried at Joyous Garde. He adds a number of short and useful paraphrases like the one quoted above, and one or two brief comments on Malory's literary technique, as in the note on p. 54, ll. 4-13. He retains the quotation from the French romance in the note on

p. 75, ll. 9-12 (1947 edn., p. 1238, ll. 11-14), the relevance of which is puzzling, but now omits the even more puzzling 'The entire speech seems to bear the stamp of *M's* workmanship'. The following difficult words occurring in the text are not in this glossary though they are in that of 1947: *besautes*, *demyng*, *kyndnes*, *tretyse*, *utteraunce*. On p. 109, 43. 15-16 should read 44. 15-16.

There are no new critical remarks, but the Introduction summarizes several of the markedly original views Professor Vinaver developed first in 1947. This separate printing of the last book of the Winchester manuscript is a natural consequence of them, but whilst it emphasizes the excellence of the book it also points the deficiency of the views, for *The Deth of Arthur*, published thus on its own, is felt very strongly to be the most handsome limb cut from a true though imperfect *corpus*, *The Hoole Book of Kyng Arthur and of his Noble Knyghtes of the Rounde Table*.

R. T. DAVIES

The Loathly Lady in 'Thomas of Erceldoune'. By WILLIAM P. ALBRECHT.

Pp. 127. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954. \$1.00.

The first part of *Thomas of Erceldoune* (a romance written, according to Mr. Albrecht, late in the fourteenth century) tells the story of Thomas and the Lady whom he met by the Eildon tree. The same story, but with an important difference of detail, is told in the better-known ballad, *Thomas Rhymer* (Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston, 1882-98), i. 317-26). Mr. Albrecht's study is concerned 'mainly with Thomas's mistress—her origins and her role in the poem' (p. 7).

It is unfortunate that Mr. Albrecht has based his interpretation on vv. 129-36 of the romance—the transformation of the Lady's beauty to ugliness after she has lain with Thomas. This transformation Mr. Albrecht takes to be an original feature of the story, and it is through a comparison with other more or less similar transformations that he arrives at his conclusion. *Thomas of Erceldoune*, he maintains, is a variant of 'a Cupid and Psyche story, in which an otherworld being seeks a human lover and, under certain circumstances, appears as an animal' (p. 28). Considered merely in terms of the Transformed Animal theme, Mr. Albrecht's discussion has merits; his arguments are sober and realistic, his illustrations well chosen. At worst, one might object to the undue deference with which authorities of doubtful value are quoted. But as an interpretation of *Thomas of Erceldoune*, his work is less satisfactory. Almost certainly the transformation of the Lady is a secondary feature of the romance, one which fulfils no narrative purpose, and which is absent from the ballad. Mr. Albrecht rather avoids discussion of the ballad—indeed on p. 7 he even states that it too contains the transformation episode. But as Child pointed out long ago, in its omission of the transformation the ballad is closer than the romance to their common original. It is, in fact, not improbable that the transformation was introduced because the author of the romance felt that the Lady's loose behaviour should not pass unpunished. In short, Mr. Albrecht's interpretation is based on inessentials. *Thomas*, with its ultimately Scottish provenance, would be better understood from a study of Gaelic and Brythonic saga more intensive than Mr. Albrecht even pretends to offer. In particular, one might refer to the Irish *Serglige Con Culainn* (edited in Windisch, *Irische Texte* (Leipzig, 1880-1909), i. 197) and also to the Welsh *Pwyll Pendewic Dyuet*, the first branch of the *Mabinogi* (edited by Sir Ifor Williams, *Pedeir Ceinc Y Mabinogi* (Caerdydd, 1930), pp. 1-27). Before this latter would be of use, however, the original story of Rhiannon and Pwyll would itself have to be reconstructed, in part with the aid of evidence drawn from *Serglige Con Culainn*. In the recension which has survived, the central motif has been much obscured. But it is probable that the original was on lines generally similar to those of *Serglige Con Culainn*. (The reconstruction by the late W. J. Gruffydd, published as *Rhiannon* (Cardiff, 1953), is to be treated with very considerable caution.) The most interesting problem connected with *Thomas* is the reason for his visit to the otherworld, and it is possible that a consideration of these parallels might lead to valuable conclusions.

As an appendix, Mr. Albrecht reprints an early printed text of the poem, together with glossary, notes, and a discussion of its relationship to the surviving manuscripts. He concludes that it is ultimately based on the same original as Sloane MS. 2578.

JOHN MACQUEEN

Musique et poésie au XVI^e siècle. Pp. 384 (Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique: Sciences humaines 5). Paris: Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1954. 1,600 fr.

This volume collects the papers given at a conference held at the Institut de Musicologie, Paris, from 30 June to 4 July 1953. There is much to interest specialists in this field: here it must suffice to mention those articles which will be of particular interest to students of English literature; but this does not mean that the inter-national and inter-subject value of the symposium is overlooked. Editors of English lyrics and ballads should ponder M. Querol's conclusion in his paper, 'Importance historique et nationale de romance', that when a poem survives both in a collection of poems and also with a musical setting, it is always in this latter version that the words have the greatest force and beauty. Other papers indicate the continental sources of English theories about the nature and power of music.

Mr. Denis Stevens in 'La Chanson anglaise avant l'école madrigaliste' draws attention to the bass parts of some twenty songs preserved in State Papers—Henry VIII, ccxvi, the instrumental settings for four of which survive in the Mulliner Book. Mr. Stevens is able to give a list of eleven early songs for which the music and words can now be reconstructed: it includes two poems by Surrey (both are printed in *Tottel's Miscellany*). In a well-argued paper on 'L'Influence de la musique italienne sur le madrigal anglais', Professor Westrup returns to the older view that the English madrigal took its origins from the publication of *Musica Transalpina* in 1588, through the influence that this collection had on Thomas Morley. Mr. Westrup shows that the words as well as the music of English madrigals often have close Italian parallels. M. Jacquot and Mr. Mellers both write of melancholy in the English madrigal; in discussing Orlando Gibbons's setting of Raleigh's 'What is our life', M. Jacquot compares the sentiment of the poem with Plotinus, *Enneads*, III. ii. In 'Rôle de la danse dans l'"Ayre" anglais' Mr. Thurston Dart suggests that whereas many of Dowland's songs were written to words already in existence, Dowland and Campion sometimes wrote their own words for music which they had originally composed for dancing. In the discussion following M. Schrade's paper, '*L'Edipo Tiranno* d'Andrea Gabrieli et la renaissance de la tragédie grecque', M. Jacquot makes a good case for William Byrd's song 'Quis me statim' having been written for the performance of Seneca's *Hippolytus*, with additions by William Gager, given at Christ Church, Oxford, in February 1591/2.

J. R.

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